MAY 1982 NUMBER 51

THE SPACE GAMER

THE MAGAZINE OF ADVENTURE GAMING

$2.50

MEGASHIPS IN *SPACE OPERA*

SCENARIO FOR *CHAMPIONS*
MAGIC IN *CAR WARS*
1981 GAME SURVEY
HANDICAPS FOR TFT CHARACTERS
WORLDS OF WONDER REVIEWED
THE COMPUTER AS FAMILIAR
STAR PATROL DESIGN NOTES
AND 8 PAGES OF REVIEWS

THE TRIBES OF CRANE

You, task chief of the Leopard people wandering tribe of Crane, sit in your great wagon awaiting news from your swift searching outriders. Suddenly hoof beats approach. The outriders leap from their mounts to your wagon flushed with excitement for they know full well the meaning of their news. But one sector to the North the great merchant caravan of the Impala people has been spotted. The order is given "To arms . . . to arms!" You snap your orders, "Gather my captains of hundreds. Let all know the tactic will be enfilade right. Now my arms, my mount." You heard that Kate, chief of the Impala people, has chosen a stand and defend tactic twice before; will he again? You know also that the Impala people are fine warriors as are all the people of the many tribes. This will be no raid of the strong on the weak, but rather a mighty clash of the ***TRIBES OF CRANE....***

The **Tribes of Crane** is a unique correspondence game, allowing for interaction between players and the fantasy world of Crane and each other through a continuous game that may be entered at any time.

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The land of Crane is a complete fantasy world with a full range of geography from the permanent ice of the polar regions, to the deserts, and tropical forests of the equator.

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GAMER

, 1982

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–Steve Jackson

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THE SPACE GAMER

NUMBER 51 — MAY, 1982

IN THIS ISSUE

All right. So we lied. One of the articles listed in April's "Not In Next Issue" box was "Magic in Car Wars." If you'll check page 10, you'll find it. We probably ought to be ashamed of ourselves, but we're not. It's insane, but fun.

For you Fantasy Trip fans, we have "Handicapped Characters in TFT." Adaptable to any RPG, this concept lets you start with a more powerful character without ruining game balance, and encourages role-playing.

Our game supplement this issue is "School Holiday," by Aaron Allston. Designed for *Champions,* it turns supervillains loose in — a junior high school!

SF role-players will find two articles this time around: our cover story, on big ships in *Space Opera*, and Mike Kurtick's designer notes on *Star Patrol.*

—Steve Jackson

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Where We're Going

NEWS FLASH

As this issue went to press, TSR announced that it had bought out SPI! For details, see the May-June issue of our sister magazine, *Fire & Movement*, which will feature a four-page article on the takeover.

After 23 issues of hard work on TSG, Forrest Johnson is moving on to other things. During Forrest's tenure, TSG doubled in frequency, increased in size, and became steadily more professional... professional enough so that its editor got a good offer from the "big boys." Forrest is leaving us to accept a position as managing editor of the new *Softalk* magazine on the IBM personal computer. We're sorry to see him go – but the new job is a great opportunity, and we wish him the best. (This was supposed to be his goodbye column, but he tells me that he hates eulogies, so we'll change the subject now. Have fun in California, old friend, and write occasionally.)

Moving into the editor's position will be Aaron Allston. There should be no break in continuity; he's been on the staff for quite a while and has served as assistant editor for the last seven issues. Aaron's big interest is role-playing games; he's possibly our best local referee, with a talent for strange situations. This issue features some of his work: a complete adventure for ***Champions***. I believe I'll just give Aaron this column (next month) so he can talk about his own plans.

Box Day Arrives

At long last, we are in full production on the Pocket Boxes. The factory is turning them out, the labels are in, the shrink-wrapper is debugged . . . it all works. Unbelievable. All mail orders received to date have been filled, and wholesale orders are going out even as I write. And the boxes look good. I'm pleased, though right now everybody's too tired to celebrate.

Missing Persons

Does anyone out there know where we can find Roland Parenteau, Martin Halbert, or Timothy C. Weidel? When we sent out free copies of *The Ogre Book* to all the contributors, we couldn't find addresses for those three . . . our pre-independence files aren't as complete as we might like. If you have a clue as to their whereabouts, please let us know.

TSG Contest Prizes

Effective this issue, we're boosting the prizes on our contests, just as an experiment. Not that this is going to turn into the Irish Sweepstakes . . . but the contests are fun, and if increasing the prizes will get more good entries, so much the better for everybody. The new prize structure will allow $50 in merchandise credit to the winner, $25 to second place; this is credit on any SJ Games product, not just TSG. This month's contest follows the "Magic in *Car Wars*" article – go to it!

PBM Ad Policy

The PBM field is growing, and we're doing our best to cover it. Unfortunately, a lot of companies get into the field before they're ready – sometimes with expensive and embarrassing results. While we can't police the whole hobby, we don't like to run ads that take our readers' money and return nothing but excuses. So:

(1) Effective this issue, we will accept no advertising from any new PBM game company until we are supplied with a copy of the rulebook, a couple of sample turns, and the names of several players who will substantiate that turns are, indeed, being received.

(2) You should be aware that all the PBM advertisers in this or the last issue (Schubel & Son, Big City, Flying Buffalo, Central Texas Computing, and GSI) are known to us to be reliable. Our "PBM Update" column is also a good indicator of which games are active.

PBM is fun; we're just trying to protect the gamers and the responsible companies from – shall we say, "overenthusiasm"? – on the part of new operations that could harm the whole hobby.

–Steve Jackson

GAME MASTER

GAME MASTER exists to answer questions on your favorite games. If you have a rules question or play problem, send it in. Questions to be answered will be chosen on the basis of general interest. They will be first referred to the game publisher or designer. If no response is received, GAME MASTER will offer its own interpretation of the rule. Sorry – no individual replies are possible.

High Guard

1. Several ***Traveller*** ship designs published by other (non-GDW) companies seem to exceed the limits set by the ***High Guard*** rules on weapons bays and turrets; a recent example is a 2000-ton ship with 3 weapons bays and 10 turrets, where (by my interpretation) it should be permitted a maximum of 2 bays and *no* turrets. Is a ship allowed one bay *and* 10 turrets per 1000 tons, or one bay *or* 10 turrets per 1000 tons?

2. The same company recently published two designs for ships under 1000 tons; both had weapons bays in addition to a full complement of turrets. Can vessels under 1000 tons ever have weapons bays?

–No Name

1. One bay OR 10 turrets per 1000 tons. The ships you saw were wrong.

2. No.

–John Harshman, GDW

Kung Fu 2100

Do the movement rules allow adjacent figures to switch places, or must one move and then the other? 4.6 is not specific.

–Randy Divinski

It is all right for adjacent figures to switch places, but one of them must end his movement with the switch . . . that is, he may only move one square that turn. The other figure may finish his move normally after the exchange of places.

–Steve Jackson

NEXT ISSUE

Now that OGRE and G.E.V. are available once again, it's time for a special OGRE issue. Next month will feature articles on basic OGRE defense, tournament OGRE / G.E.V., OGRE Squash, and "The Lone G.E.V.," a fictional piece by Mike Stackpole, introducing two new units: a hovercraft missile platform and the Tactical Recon Ogre. Also in the June issue:

"More Ogranizations of Cidri," a TFT article;

Variant rules for GDW's ASTEROID; and

A complete die-rolling program for programmable calculators.

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FEATURED REVIEW:

Worlds of Wonder

by William A. Barton

Chaosium has followed up its recent ***Call of Cthulhu*** RPG with another that builds upon its ***Basic Role Playing*** introductory rules. The new offering, however, features *three* (count 'em, three) interchangeable RPGs in one package – ***Magic World, Super World,*** and ***Future World.*** The overall system is called ***Worlds of Wonder.***

Worlds of Wonder comes packaged in an inch-thick box with a cover painting featuring a spear-toting warrior, a wizard, and a Buck-Rogers-type with laser and/or blaster, and a costumed crime fighter wielding bolts of lightning, all side by side. It's unfortunate that this rather striking cover could turn off more "serious" gamers who might consider the mix a bit too unlikely. Some of the earlier advertising, which abbreviated "Worlds of Wonder" as "WOW," probably had the same effect. That's a shame, because ***Worlds of Wonder*** is actually a nice piece of work. The three systems included in the game are near-introductory-level RPGs. ***Future World*** probably won't draw many SFRPGers away from ***Traveller*** or ***Space Opera; Magic World*** isn't likely to seriously challenge AD&D, ***RuneQuest*** or ***The Fantasy Trip;*** and ***Super World*** may not deliver a knock-out punch to ***Champions*** or ***Villains & Vigilantes.*** Still, gamers who might have found any of those systems a bit too much to contend with, or who are new to role-playing and want something simpler will find ***Worlds of Wonder*** invaluable.

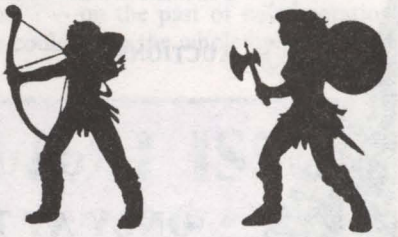
Despite some problems, all three games actually work quite well, as long as you're not looking for complexity. Perhaps the most notable feature of the three is the interchangeability of the games, not only with each other, but with other Chaosium systems. Characters from ***Magic World, Future World*** or ***Super World*** may interact with Cthulhoid horrors from ***Call of Cthulhu***; aspects of WOW can even be mixed with ***RuneQuest.*** And it seems that Chaosium plans more RPGs with BRP as a base, so they, too, will be compatible with WOW. It can be quite interesting to see what a powerful wizard might do if faced with starship troopers in battle armor, or what a team of righteous superheroes would use to counter the mind-blasting horror of Yog-Sothoth, or how a scientist of the future might counter sorcery.

Granted, you may not want to mix future science with ancient magic on a regular basis. So traffic between ***Magic World*** and ***Future World*** characters may not be a common occurance. Ah, but ***Super World*** . . . The magic users of MW would easily convert into such superheroes as Dr. Strange or villains like Felix Faust (old JLA fans take note). And how many times have Superman or Green Lantern had to contend with laser-wielding aliens or supervillains the likes of Brainiac or Sinestro? FW weaponry and equipment would fit right in. Too many other superhero RPGs have ignored magic or futuristic weaponry altogether (in obvious contrast from the comics). WOW alleviates that problem.

Another nice feature of ***Worlds of Wonder*** is the additional rules the three include that were overlooked in BRP – ***Super World*** contains the rules for poisons, ***Magic World*** those for fire as a weapon (missing from COC) – and several new rules that may be used with all BRP systems: knockbacks, critical hits and fumbles, major wounds and encumbrance. These go a long way toward making the BRP-based systems more complete.

Magic World

The individual systems of WOW, though not perfect, are quite playable in themselves. ***Magic World*** does much to take BRP, essentially an *introduction* to role-playing, and flesh it out into a true FRPG. The complexity of the MW/BRP hybrid falls somewhere between ***Tunnels & Trolls*** and ***The Fantasy Trip.*** It is more realistic than the former, though falls short of the latter. MW adds character classes: warriors, rogues and sages, as well as magicians. The weapons list is expanded, and prices (in silver crowns) are added. Several new skills take their place alongside the BRP base chance skills, including the roguish abilities of "Cut Purse" and "Fine Manipulation" (can't get through a dungeon without the latter) and a whole slew of sage skills. And, of course, spells are added, though the list is a bit limited – only about three pages worth, total. (And the spells of MW could easily be incorporated into ***Call of Cthulhu*** to beef up the spells of that game with more traditional ones.) Also added are a list of creatures and fantasy races and a very brief list of treasures.



Magic World may soon have the experienced fantasy gamer crying in frustration for more than is offered here. However, the beginner will find it as complete and comprehensible as TSR's ***Basic D&D.*** The scenario at the end of ***Magic World***'s somewhat slim 18 pages is nothing overly exciting, but would make a good first scenario for new gamers.

Future World

To many, ***Future World*** may appear to be the weakest of the three entries in WOW, due primarily to strong competition from ***Traveller.*** There are similarities, some of which will be unavoidable in almost any SFRPG. Like ***Traveller, Star***

Patrol, Star Rovers, and to some extent, *Space Opera* and *Universe,* a *Future World* character gains skills and increases in them through several terms in various services – the army, scouts, scientists, civilians, criminals, or ICE (Imperial Corps of Engineers). Unlike *Traveller,* however, all characters serve six one-year terms and may switch services as they go. Another, more radical, departure from existing SF systems is the lack of space travel in *Future World.* Unlike *Star Rovers,* however, where space travel was simply left for a future module, *Future World* neatly side-steps the issue by introducing transport gates. All interstellar travel is accomplished by merely stepping through a gate from one planet to the next. While this may take the joy out of the system for those who dote on gory space battles and wild boarding actions, it is a workable solution, and most adventures take place on world surfaces anyway.

Some of the main problems in *Future World* come in its equipment sections. Several of the descriptions are a bit vague or difficult to comprehend on first reading, mainly due to brevity. The very important "Tacpack," which powers much of a character's weapons and equipment, is given only a 13-line explanation (though info in other places helps illuminate its functions). No price is given for the four vehicles described in the book, even though some characters may leave the service with enough cash to purchase their own transportation. The alien races, while interesting, could have stood more explanation; no stats are given at all for one important citizen race. Psionics are mentioned in connection with the insectoid Quertzl and reptilian Sauriki, but aren't covered further. *Future World,* even more than *Magic World,* seems to cry out for expansion beyond what is offered in its 18 pages. Until such expansions exist, FW's main use will probably come in providing additional futuristic weapons and equipment for use in the other WOW systems.

Super World

Super World is probably the most interesting of the three WOWs, at least to

this reviewer, if only because threre are few superhero RPGs currently available. Only three major ones come to mind – *Superhero 2044, Villians & Vigilantes,* and *Champions. Super World* is far superior to the first of these and combines many of the best features from the other two. Also, it's far more comprehensive than V&V and easier to follow than *Champions.* BRP stats are rolled up as usual (with adds to those that are too low to reflect better health standards), then added to give a number of hero points that may be expended to buy levels of superpowers, skills, or increases in base skills, increased characteristics, or even special equipment. This is similar to the method used in *Champions,* except in that game, all characteristics start at the same value and players receive the same numbers of points to use to purchase powers, etc. Thus *Super World* actually will yield a wider variety of beginning characters than *Champions,* for all the latter's extra complexity. Other concepts seem to have been borrowed from *Champions* (or were developed independently – only the designers know for sure). Extra hero points can be added by choosing disabilities or disadvantages for the character (limiting powers, having special vulnerabilities, etc.), as in *Champions.* An interesting contrast in concepts here, though, is that in *Champions,* having a secret identity is considered a liability worth hero points, while in *Super World, not* having one is the disadvantage.

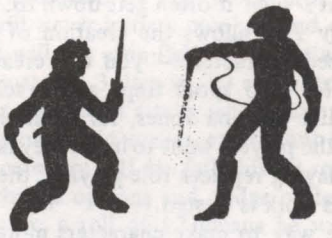
The super powers are relatively comprehensive. Many are similar to those listed in V&V and *Champions,* but then there are only so many powers, and some are so common they will crop up quite often – flight, super strength, stretching, and so on. Powers can come from a superhero's own inner resources, or may be tools or gadgets he carries with him (Spiderman's web shooters, Batman's batarangs, etc.). Many of the powers have to be charged by energy – personal or battery-supplied – to work, so energy supply is a power that can be purchased at 10 energy points per hero point expended. Almost any superhero from comicdom can be created with *Super World,* except the more ultrapowered ones such as Superman, Green Lantern, or J'onn J'onzz – characters whose presence would unbalance most campaigns anyway. With the addition of MW and FW, the range of SW heroes is widened.

Another nice touch in *Super World* is the size table, listing the sizes of various objects from potted plant to jet liner, for the purposes of lifting, throwing, and breaking. This and the knockbacks added to the combat rules should simulate nicely the typical superhero conflicts of the comics.

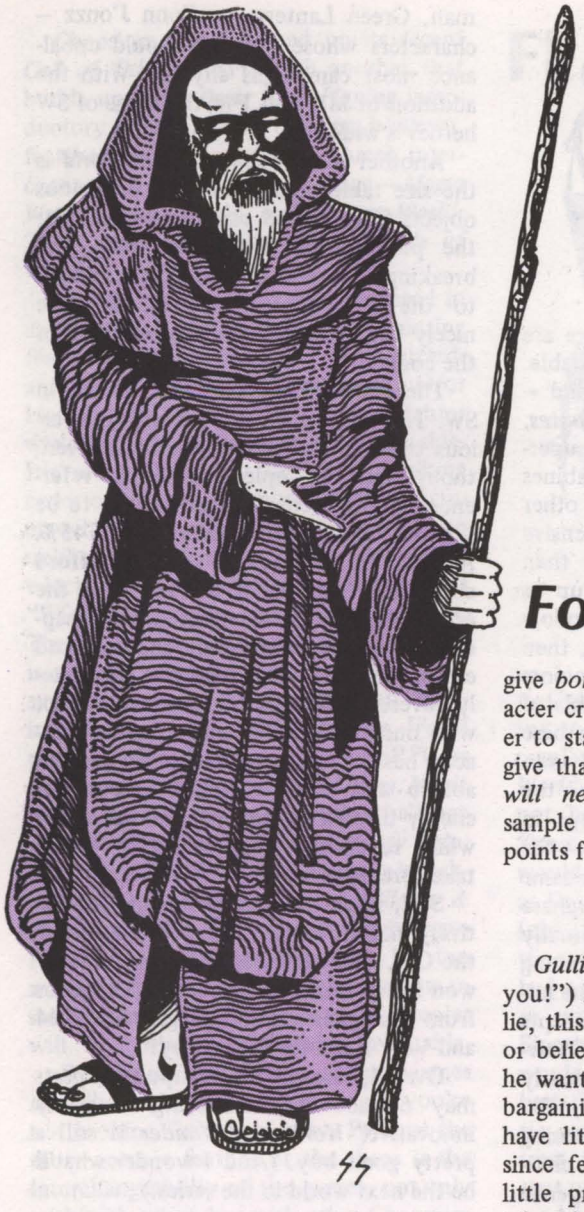
There are some problems evident in SW. The basic chance to hit with the various superpowers is never actually given, though from examples and oblique references in the scenario, I guessed it to be the same as the throw percentage of 45%. A letter from Chaosium's Greg Stafford confirmed this, and it will appear in the errata. Equipment lists, except for weapons, are almost nonexistent, and will need expansion eventually. Also not adequately covered is how certain powers interact with one another. For example, if a character has the power of absorption and can absorb and store a certain amount of energy thrown at him, yet also has armor which repels that type of energy, which takes precedence?

Still, most of SW's problems are relatively minor, easily compensated for by the GM. And while *Super World* probably won't draw many *Champions* aficionados from that game, it should give SH 2044 and V&V a run for the money.

Overall, though its component parts may not be earth-shattering or overly innovative, *Worlds of Wonder* is still a pretty good buy. (And I wonder what'll be the next world in the series.)



Worlds of Wonder is designed by Steve Perrin, Steve Henderson, Gordon Monson, Greg Stafford, and Lynn Willis, and is published by Chaosium, Inc. It retails for $16.00 and includes ***Basic Role Playing, Magic World, Super World,*** *and* ***Future World*** *rulebooks, charts and character sheets, cut-out character silhouettes, a map of the City of Wonder, and 3 six-sided, 1 20-sided, 1 eight-sided, and 1 four-sided dice, boxed.*



Handicapped Characters in TFT

by Forrest Johnson

Kill-da-monsters-and-grab-da-loot.

That's what it often gets down to. ***The Fantasy Trip*** allows the creation of personalized characters – you can create a character who spots traps and cracks a whip like Indiana Jones, for example – but if the players want to hack, they hack. Roll-playing replaces role-playing; the designer's work is wasted.

One way to make characters more interesting is to give them handicaps. Indiana Jones was afraid of snakes. Captain Ahab hobbled around on a peg leg. Conan kept losing his temper. These things can enhance role-playing, but they interefere with hacking. A sharp GM rewards role-playing with an occasional experience bonus, but the easy points come from butchering goblins. Who wants a character that's afraid of snakes?

There is a way to make handicapped characters more attractive. The GM can give *bonus points* for handicapped character creation. For example, allow a player to start with a 34-point character, but give that character a handicap *which he will never outgrow.* Below are some sample handicaps, with suggested bonus points for each.

1-Point Handicaps

Gullible: ("Hey, mister! Look behind you!") It matters not how outrageous the lie, this character must roll 3 dice vs. IQ or believe it. A similar roll is required if he wants to avoid taking the first offer in bargaining. However, this handicap will have little effect on his combat ability, since few monsters will know about his little problem, or be bright enough to take advantage of it.

Hard of Hearing: ("Eh, what did you say?") This character must roll an extra die to notice a sound. He will not hear what is going on if the other characters whisper. He cannot learn Acute Hearing.

Homosexual: ("Oh, really, Brucie.") This fellow is an obvious homosexual, a flaming faggot or butch dike, if you will. He gets a -1 reaction from characters of the same sex, unless they themselves are homosexual. (With other homosexuals, he gets a +1 reaction because of the camaraderie of the gay community. The GM may wish to allow a 10% chance or so that a given NPC is homosexual.)

Miserly: ("Bah! I wouldn't give you three coppers for that thing!") A miser must roll 3 dice vs. IQ to part with his money for *anything.* He will often sleep in a barn rather than waste his hard-earned silvers on an inn. If he misses a roll, he can try again the next day (or week, if he is trying to buy a magic item).

2-Point Handicaps

Alcoholic: ("Get that bottle away from Spitsky!") An alcoholic must roll 3 dice vs. IQ to abstain *any time* the opportunity for drinking presents itself. Once he starts drinking, he must roll 4 dice vs. IQ to stop. He may roll once after each drink he takes; it is assumed that these are hefty drinks. After consuming a number of drinks equal to his ST divided by 4 (drop any fractions) he will be sufficiently pickled that his resolve will evaporate entirely; he will continue drinking until thoroughly soused. Thus, a human with a ST of 11 or less would get two chances to quit once he started drinking; a character with ST 12-15 would get three chances, and so on.

Once drunk, he will be no good to anyone for 8 hours, and will have a hangover (-2 to all rolls) for 8 hours after that. (It is presumed that the character is a binge drinker rather than a chronic drinker; no modification need be made to employment rolls.)

Caiaphas (Lame Wizard)

ST 8
DX 14
IQ 12

Talents: Whip, Literacy

Spells: Trip, Detect Magic, Illusion, Lock/Knock, Magic Rainstorm, Mage Sight, 3-Hex Fire, Repair, Fireball

History: Caiaphas always wanted to be a warrior. He was a very promising student, outshining the other boys on the practice field; that is, he outshone them until an accident left him crippled, lame and weak. Apprenticing as a wizard rather late, he did not learn all the spells his intelligence would allow. However, he retains skill with the whip, one weapon he can still use in his present condition.

Personality: Caiaphas cannot get it out of his head that he was crippled deliberately in a faked accident. He is a bitter person, and treats heroes condescendingly.

Lame: ("Do we have to wait for Thorbald to catch up again?") This character suffers a modifier of -2 to his movement allowance, after other modifiers. A lame character cannot learn Running.

Nearsighted: ("Look out! Osmund's trying to use his bow!") A nearsighted character must roll an extra die to notice anything that requires vision. He is -2 with missile weapons and spells, and cannot learn Alertness.

Odious: ("I have a better idea. *I'll* negotiate with the gargoyles.") This character is physically or personally offensive. He gets a -1 to all reaction rolls, and cannot learn Charisma.

Over-Sexed: ("Oh, no! There goes Julia again!") This person suffers from satyriasis or nymphomania. He must roll 3 dice vs. IQ to avoid trying to seduce strangers of the opposite sex (or same sex, if homosexual). A roll of 17 means the attempt is especially crude and gross; check reaction at -2. A roll of 18 means the character attempts to rape whomever on the spot.

3-Point Handicaps

Choleric: ("To hell with negotiating! Let's just clobber them!") A choleric character prefers violence to talk. He must roll 3 dice vs. IQ to avoid attacking any potential enemy without preliminaries. A roll of 17 means he will also attack anyone who tries to restrain him; 18 means he automatically goes berserk. Once combat is initiated, he must roll 4 dice if he wants to stop hacking while his enemies still stand. A choleric character cannot learn Diplomacy.

Slyhock (Cowardly Halfling Hero)

ST 4
DX 16
IQ 13

Talents: Thrown Weapons, Sha-Ken, Charisma, Alertness, Recognize Value, Assess Value, Business Sense, Thief

Spells: None

History: Slyhock is small, even for a halfling. He learned early that there were two ways he could deal with larger folk – outwit them or outrun them. Practicing both arts, he left the Shire shortly before the new owners came to take possesseion of the Brandywine Bridge.

Personality: These days, Slyhock makes his living as a dealer in valuable objects of mysterious origin; in other words, as a fence. He generally prefers to let other people take the risks, but he can usually put on a brave face when his greed is aroused, or when he feels personally threatened.

Cowardly: ("I'll make sure no one sneaks up on us from the rear!") This character must roll 3 dice vs. IQ at the beginning of *every round* of combat to avoid choosing the option "disengage" if engaged and "run like hell" if not. A roll of 17 means he drops his weapons in addition; 18 means he has also soiled his britches.

Kleptomaniac: ("I'll frisk the bodies!") A kleptomaniac must roll 3 dice vs. IQ to avoid stealing something every time the opportunity presents itself. (If he is on a long expedition with a group, check daily.) It does not matter that the object is of little worth, belongs to a friend, or is completely useless; a klepto will steal *anything.* A roll of 17 means he must try to steal two items; 18 means three attempts. One small advantage: it costs a klepto only one IQ point to become a Thief. (He already is, competent or not!) A kleptomaniac sometimes feels guilty afterwards; let him roll 3 dice vs. IQ to give back whatever he has stolen. He only gets one try.

Note: When a kleptomaniac fails his roll, indicating that something is to be stolen, success is NOT automatic; he must still carry off the theft, using any Thief talent he possesses. If caught, he may attempt to use Charisma, Diplomacy, etc. to explain it away.

One-Armed: ("No, I don't want to buy a shield!") This character's handicap is obvious. If he is a hero, he can only use one-handed weapons. A one-armed wizard is effectively limited to spells at least two points lower than his IQ. (Higher ones require gestures with two hands.) Note that a one-armed wizard *can* use a staff in combat, but does not benefit from the Quarterstaff talent.

One-Legged: (Thump, thump, thump.) This character is presumed to have a peg leg. He moves at half his normal MA. (A human in leather moves 4.) He can learn Running (which increases his MA by 1), but cannot learn Silent Movement.

4-Point Handicaps

Blind: ("You say you want a helmet with no eye slit?") A blind character is in darkness all the time. He has no chance of noticing anything which requires vision. However, he gets Acute Hearing free, regardless of his IQ, and he can move his full MA. Even so, he is at -4 to hit, or perform any other task which requires hand-eye coordination. A blind wizard cannot benefit from Dark Vision, Mage Sight, or other vision-oriented spells, though he can cast them on others. He cannot use any creation spells except Fire, Rope, and Shadow, and obviously, he gains no benefit from scrolls or magic books. (They haven't heard of Braille on Cidri.) However, he is at no DX minus for the creation spells he can use, for self-targeted spells, special spells, and spells cast on something he can touch. (You usually cannot touch an enemy in a combat situation; he won't let you.) Also, blind characters are in no way inhibited by Blur, Darkness, Dazzle, Shadow, or Invisibility.

Hemophiliac: ("Medic!") A hemophiliac takes an extra hit from every attack which penetrates his armor. Moreover, he will take an additional hit point per minute per wound until he is attended by a Physicker or dies.

Gerta (Moronic Hero)

ST 13
DX 15
IQ 7

Talents: Sword, Shield, Pole Weapons, Riding

Spells: None

History: Gerta was a talented opera singer, until a sandbag fell on her head during a performance of *Die Valkyrie.* The brain damage was irreversible.

Personality: In her own mind, Gerta is a glorious valkyrie. The fact that other people consider her a drooling idiot does not seem to enter her consciousness.

Moronic: ("Duh.") This fellow starts with IQ 7, and can never raise his IQ except by magic. He has trouble tying his shoelaces. Sometimes a moron is an *idiot savant*; a moron can learn any *one* talent of IQ 8 or higher by paying twice the usual point cost. Morons also pay double to learn languages; they cannot learn spells at all.

Pacifist: ("Look, that slime will leave you alone if you leave it alone!") A pacifist is possessed by high moral principles. He will *never* initiate combat, and sometimes will not even fight back if attacked. He must roll 3 dice vs. IQ every time he tries to make an attack which does damage (pins, shield rushes, etc. do not fall in that category). If he fails his IQ roll, he can change options and dodge or defend. However, a roll of 17 means he *will* attempt to disengage if engaged; 18 means that he will stand meekly and try to explain things to the enemy while it attacks.

Stuttering: ("L-l-l-look out!") This is a severe handicap. A character who stutters must roll 3 dice vs. IQ *every time* he tries to communicate through speech. This applies to bargaining, Diplomacy, etc. He cannot learn Courtly Graces; his fine manners will seem clownish. A wizard who stutters is at -4 with any spell which requires speech. Worst of all, if you have

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a character who stutters, *you* should stutter every time he says something!

Variable-Point Handicaps

Fat: ("How come the monsters always want to eat *me*?") A fat character gets one bonus creation point for every 4 encumbrance points of fat (8 for dwarves). Fat encumbrance is *permanent,* and is cumulative with carried encumbrance. However, it does have one small advantage – it doesn't count for swimming. Fat people tend to float.

Neurotic: ("Why did it have to be snakes?") There are many kinds of neuroses, but phobias are the easiest to handle. Points would range from one for a mild phobia (fear of snakes) to three for something radical (general xenophobia). See ***Call of Cthulhu*** for a useful list of phobias. A phobic character must roll 3 dice vs. IQ upon encountering the Terrible Whatever. A miss means he flees in panic (and may roll 4 dice vs. IQ per round to recover). A 17 means he drops his weapons and flees; 18 means that he does not drop his weapons or flee, but attacks with berserk fury!

Old: ("I warned you youngsters what would happen if you picked a fight with a dragon!") Some people don't start adventuring until late in life. For each 10 years of age above 20, allow the character one bonus point for creation purposes.

Handicap Table

In real life, you don't get to choose your handicaps. If the GM prefers, he can decide how many handicaps to allow a player-character, and then let him roll five dice:

5 Moronic (4 pts)
6 Pacifist (4 pts)
7 One-Armed (3 pts)
8 Choleric (3 pts)
9 Cowardly (3 pts)
10 Old (3 pts)
11 Alcoholic (2 pts)
12 Nearsighted (2 pts)
13 Old (2 pts)
14 Miserly (1 pt)
15 Hard of Hearing (1 pt)
16 Neurotic (1d: 1-3, one pt; 4-5, two pts, 6, three pts)
17 Old (1 pt)
18 Fat (1 pt)
19 Homosexual (1 pt)
20 Gullible (1 pt)
21 Fat (2 pts)
22 Lame (2 pts)
23 Odious (2 pts)
24 Over-Sexed (2 pts)
25 Fat (3 pts)
26 Kleptomaniac (3 pts)
27 One-Legged (3 pts)
28 Stuttering (4 pts)
29 Hemophiliac (4 pts)
30 Blind (4 pts)

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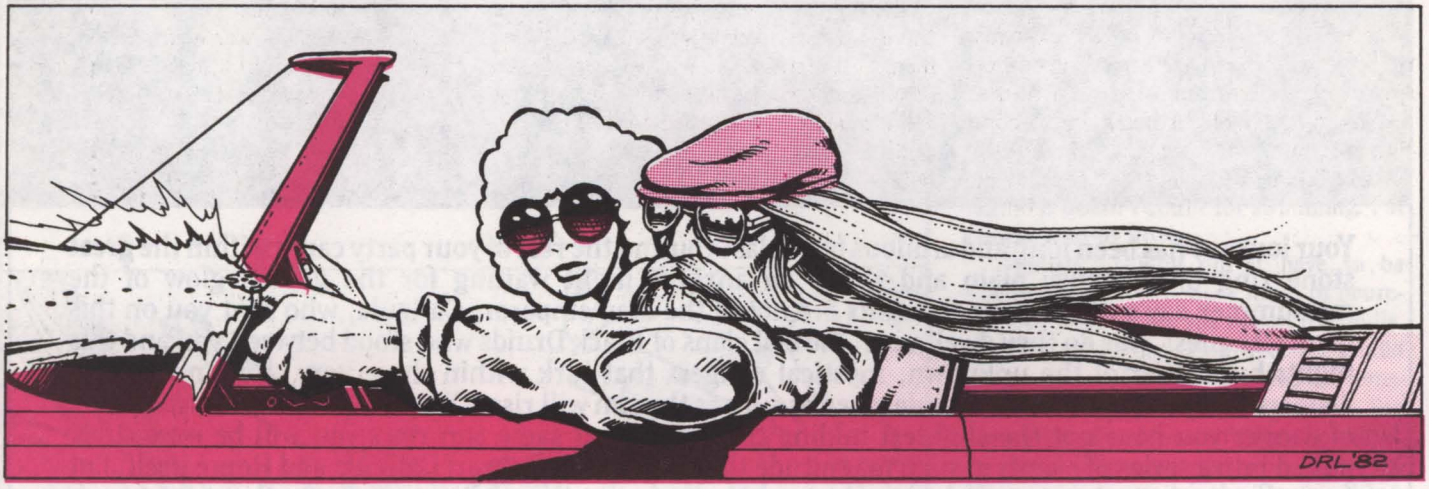
Magic in CAR WARS



by Steve Jackson

These rules came from a single vivid mental picture – you can see Denis Loubet's version of it above. Way back when we were first playtesting *Car Wars,* I got an image of an old fellow with a long white beard, driving his convertible down the freeway, his hair whipping in the wind . . . and when some smart-aleck took a pot shot at him, he'd turn around and ZAP . . . a lightning bolt. Magic in *Car Wars.* Right.

And one day, just for fun, I sat down and put it all into writing. Here it is. Enjoy. Please note: I've made no effort whatsoever to provide a rational background for these rules. I don't have one. If you need one, think of it yourself.

Who Can Be Wizards?

If you're using magic rules, anyone and everyone can play a wizard. If (heaven forbid) you want to set up a whole campaign using these rules, you should assume that no more than one out of every ten NPCs know any spells.

Learning Spells

Player characters may be assumed to know all the spells listed below, and any others that you can think of. To determine what spells an NPC knows, roll two dice: he knows all the spells up to and including that number. That is, if you roll a 10, the NPC knows spells one through ten.

If you like, feel free to get complicated and start with ignorant wizards who learn more spells as they progress (those few that live that long). The simple assumptions above are enough to get you out onto the road with your lightning bolts and fireballs.

Spell Points

Each wizard starts a game with 12 *spell points,* representing the amount of magical energy he has. The more spell points a wizard has remaining, the more spells he can cast, AND the better his chances are of casting each spell. Each spell has a "cost" in spell points – see the Spell List, below.

Some spells may be continued, once cast, at a lower point cost. This cost is paid at the beginning of each turn, before a new spell may be attempted. It IS possible to continue one (or more) spells during a turn and still cast a new one, if you have enough spell points left.

In a campaign game, assume that each wizard regains one used-up spell point every hour on the hour, up to his maximum. For beginning characters this maximum will be 12. Experienced characters will have a higher maximum.

Improving Magical Ability

Each wizard character has a Magic Ability skill. Like the other skills, it starts at zero and improves with practice. A wizard scores Magic Ability points as follows:

One for each combat in which he uses magic.

One for each character killed (directly or indirectly – ref's decision final) by his use of magic.

One for each combat in which his spell points are entirely depleted – that is, run down to zero. Frivolous waste of spell points after combat is basically over does NOT count – but if you want to waste power at the *beginning* of a combat, go ahead. If you survive, you deserve the bonus.

For every ten points you have in Magic Ability skill (round down) you add one point to your maximum spell points. Example: Alfredus Mechanismus has 17 points of magical skill. 1/10 of this is 1.7 points – round down to 1. He has one extra spell point, so now he begins each game with 13 instead of 12.

Casting Spells

Casting a spell is considered an "action," just like firing a weapon. Thus, no character may attempt more than one spell a turn – and, whether it works or not, that is his action. A pedestrian who casts a spell is deemed to have "fired," and may not move for the rest of the turn. Clearly, it is impossible for one character to both fire a weapon and cast a spell on the same turn.

A wizard may attempt a spell at any time in a turn, so long as he has not already attempted some other action. He says, "I'm casting a spell." Other play is then interrupted while the results of his attempt are figured.

First, it is necessary to see if the spell worked! To succeed with any spell, a wizard must roll *his remaining spell points or less* on two dice. *A roll of 5 or less works automatically, regardless of the points the wizard has.* Example: Alfredus has 8 spell points left. He attempts to cast a fireball – a 3-point spell. He rolls a 7 for success. He needed an 8 or less, so he

is fine; the spell worked. (He now has only 5 spell points left.) Note that the fireball does not automatically hit – he still has to roll to see if it struck its target. See below.

If an attempt *fails*, the wizard expends no spell points, but he can try no other spell (or do anything else) that turn.

No "success roll" is necessary to continue a spell. If a wizard successfully cast a continuing spell, he can continue it at will, as long as he has spell points. Once he lets it lapse, though, he must start over if he wants to cast it again.

Hitting the Target

There are two types of spells. AUTOMATIC spells work perfectly if the "success" roll is made. "Weapon" spells require a roll to hit, just as though a weapon were being fired. All the "to hit" modifications from ***Car Wars*** apply here. Exception: Targeting computers don't help! If a lightning bolt, fireball, or rock misses its target, you may either forget about it, or use the "overshoot" rules from "Sunday Drivers" (TSG 50). If a curse misses its target, it is totally ineffective. Either way, a spell which succeeds but misses its target will still cost its user the spell points he spent to cast it.

Spells

1. *Smoke Cloud.* Automatic; costs one point. One smoke counter is placed anywhere the wizard likes, adjacent to himself or his vehicle. All effects are identical to that of a normal smoke counter.

2. *Fifty-Caliber Rock.* Weapon; costs one point. Base roll to hit is 7. If this spell hits its target, it does 1 die damage as though it were a normal machine-gun.

3. *Curse Vehicle.* Weapon; costs two points. Base roll to hit is 8. Lowers the handling class of the target vehicle. Roll one die for effect; on a roll of 1 through 4, HC is lowered by 1. On a roll of 5 or 6, it is lowered by 2. Effect of this spell lasts one hour.

4. *Summon Mechanic.* Automatic; costs four points. This spell brings a technologically-inclined demon who immediately repairs one system of any vehicle (caster's choice) to full function, regardless of the damage it might have sustained. The vehicle may be in motion at the time; the demon doesn't care. This spell lowers maintenance costs drastically! (Referees: You should assume, if you are running a campaign, that this spell ONLY works in combat because the demon will not appear unless blood is in the offing. That will aid game balance.)

5. *Fireball.* Weapon; costs three points. Base roll to hit is 7. If this spell hits its target, it does 2 dice of damage equivalent in all ways to that done by a flamethrower.

6. *Magic Armor.* Automatic; costs three points. Adds two dice worth of magic protection to any one component (caster's choice) of his own vehicle or any vehicle he is touching when he casts the spell. Enemy fire must destroy this armor before it can affect the component. Examples of a "single component": left front wheel, turret armor, one machine gun, targeting computer. Body armor can be magically strengthened, but a person's own body cannot be. This spell will not repair damage already suffered, and may not "double up" on a single component. Effect of this spell lasts one hour.

7. *Curse Weapon.* Weapon; costs three points. Base roll to hit is 8. If this spell succeeds and strikes its target, it will hex any one weapon, adding to the roll that weapon needs to hit. Roll one die and add the result to the weapon's "to hit" number. Effects last one hour.

8. *Invisibility.* Automatic; costs four points to cast, plus one per turn continued. Any attack against an invisible character is at -6. A character who had not seen you before you became invisible cannot attack you at all! This spell affects the caster's vehicle and everyone in it. If the caster is a pedestrian, it will affect one or two people standing directly adjacent to the caster, if he so wills it.

9. *Curse Person.* Weapon; costs four points. Base roll to hit is 5. This spell will do ONE POINT of damage to its target if it hits . . . directly to his or her body, and bypassing all vehicle and body armor, magically enhanced or otherwise. (One point of damage may not seem like much – but it is half the amount that will knock you unconscious in ***Car Wars***!) Note that it is always aimed at an individual person and, therefore, always has an automatic -3 to hit.

10. *Reverse Missiles.* Automatic; costs five points to cast, plus one per turn continued. This spell will cause almost any weapon fired at its subjects to reverse and return to the person or vehicle who fired it. Make the *same "to hit" roll* against the attacker that he would have made against the wizard; if the weapon hits, it does its normal damage to its new target. (If the attacker is also protected by this spell, each player rolls one die. The low roller had the weaker spell, and the missile goes after him.) This spell will deflect flamethrowers, all solid missiles, and spells 2, 5, and 11 from this list. It will not deflect laser fire or Curse spells. It has the same area of effect as Invisibility, above.

11. *Lightning.* Weapon; costs 5 points. Base roll to hit is 6. If this spell hits its target, it does 3 dice of damage equivalent in all ways to that done by a flamethrower. It may also short out a car's electrical systems. Roll 1 die. On a result of 6 the target vehicle's power plant goes dead! It will not work until recharged (takes 2 hours at a garage, costs $100).

CONTEST

This month's contest: Come up with new magical spells for ***Car Wars***. (Ideas for magical items will also be accepted.) Entries will be judged entirely subjectively; the funnier and more original, the better. If you happen to be an artist, go ahead and illustrate your suggestions! In the likely event of duplicated ideas, the best treatment is more important than postmark.

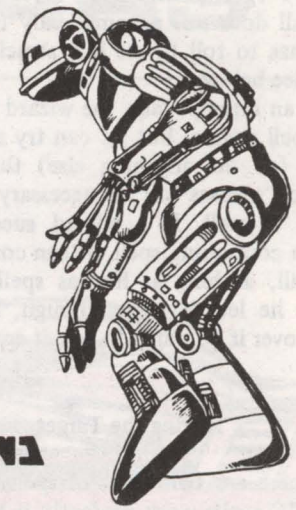
All entries will become the property of TSG/SJ Games. The winner will receive a certificate good for $50 of our products; second place will earn a $20 certificate. Honorable mentions will be printed in TSG, as space allows. As always, we reserve the right to award fewer or no prizes if we don't like any of the entries.

All entries must be postmarked by June 15, 1982.

Designer's Notes

STAR PATROL

by Michael Scott Kurtick



In 1975, when ***Dungeons & Dragons*** was just beginning to hit its stride, two novice designers in Salt Lake City were approached by Lou Zocchi, who had the idea of doing a *Star Trek* D&D. Of course there were many problems with such a project – paying a huge licensing fee to Paramount Pictures, making the game acceptable to the many trekkies who would try playing it, and making it also acceptable to regular, hard-core gamers. Rockland Russo and I began working on the project in the Fall of '75 and it rapidly became apparent that *Star Trek* was too limited a subject for a role-playing game. So we started adding things to it: More weapons, random alien tables, and many additional systems that would eventually make the game a general science fiction role-playing game rather than one which specialized in just one subject. I moved down to Biloxi, Mississippi, to work for Lou Zocchi's Gamescience Corp., and took the project with me. Soon after that, the game emerged in its initial form: ***Space Patrol.***

Space Patrol was published after Rick Loomis and Ken St. Andre released ***Starfaring*** and about the same time as ***Traveller.*** Zocchi's modest Gamescience operation was not yet able to financially support major graphics work, and ***Space Patrol*** showed it with a generally cheap appearance. The game also did not include many elements that the other games possessed, such as space exploration, starship handling and combat, or economics. ***Space Patrol***'s best features were its alien generation system and its rather clean combat system.

Soon after the publication of ***Space Patrol,*** I did get the chance to do a *Star Trek* role-playing game for Heritage, who had managed to acquire a license to do both game and figures. ***Star Trek: Adventure Gaming on the Final Frontier*** was essentially a clone of ***Space Patrol,*** concentrating on the elements of the *Star Trek* universe. The figures were poorly sculpted and the advertising campaign promised by Heritage never materialized. Paramount withdrew its license.

Over the next several years, Russo and I collaborated on an intense rewrite of ***Space Patrol,*** running long-distance phone bills up to appropriately astronomical levels. Finally, in 1981, the project was ready for release, and due to the huge expansion of material, the game was rechristened ***Star Patrol.***

Star Patrol comes boxed, for $15.00, and includes a rather large rulebook (68 pages), a complete set of polyhedra and regular dice, cardboard miniatures similar to the ***Cardboard Heroes*** produced by SJ Games (any chance of getting Loubet to redraw them for ***Star Patrol,*** Steve?), a set of deck plans with scenario, and a sheet of regular hex paper.

Star Patrol rules cover random alien generation, character skills, gravity and movement, combat with all types of edged and ranged weapons, star system generation, simple trade and exploration tables, a large range of starship types and combat rules for them, and a scenario generation system.

Unfortunately, ***Star Patrol*** suffers from an inordinate number of typographical errors. This is partially remedied by the included errata.

Space Patrol was originally to be an open-ended role-playing system, adaptable to any science fiction situation. To this end, we included practically every SF weapon we could find in our libraries. This was carried over to ***Star Patrol,*** which includes lists of typical aliens from classic works of science fiction and special notes concerning different kinds of FTL travel and combat. This has proven to be one of ***Star Patrol***'s biggest advantages and biggest faults. It's an advantage in that a particular player will have less trouble fitting their favorite SF universe into a role-playing game, but it's a disadvantage when a harried mission master is trying to get a game going and the players keep wanting to introduce elements into the adventure that don't belong there.

"I want a Phaser II!"

"But this is not Star Trek!"

"It's in the rules – why can't I have it?"

Traveller, Space Opera, Spacequest, and ***Universe*** all situate their adventures in clearly defined, specific future histories. This is a tremendous advantage in that the designers created their own universe and could then limit it or expand upon it as they wished. All of the above works claim that you can play any of your favorite SF stories with their systems, but in reality this would take a lot of fudging on the part of the game master.

Realizing the advantages of a limited universe, we included the bare bones of one at the back of the ***Star Patrol*** rulebook. This "League of Star Systems" universe is basically the same one included in my SF miniatures game, ***Strike Team Alpha,*** and was also used much earlier with the amateur published effort, ***Star Command.***

The League of Star Systesm is generally similar to the kind of universe created by Poul Anderson for his Polesotechnic League and Terran Empire, though the differences are many. Eventually there will be a ***Star Patrol Technical Manual,*** which will include the history of the League, three-views of many of the spacecraft, details of weaponry, uniforms, aliens, and technology. Currently, the only ***Star Patrol*** supplement in print is the ***Star Patrol Mission Master Pack*** from Terra Games Co. This includes graph paper, hex paper, sector star charts, character readout sheets, combat tables on heavy stock, and a special scenario using the starship deck plans already included in ***Star Patrol.***

Star Patrol is designed to be midway in complexity between ***Traveller*** and simpler RPGs. It is prepared so that the newcomer to role-playing can get involved in science fiction adventures with little difficulty or time wasted. Admittedly, ***Star Patrol*** requires a little more creative input from the players (we don't tell you which colleges you attended or how many medals you got in 2256, for example), but imagination is what role-playing is all about, and ***Star Patrol*** is one item that will give your imagination a good workout!

Laws

Generally, players of ***Star Patrol*** will be interested in what type of weapons they may carry on a planet, when it comes to local laws. Basically, the more hostile the planetary environment, the stricter the controls placed on its citizens in order to prevent the endangering of the life-support capabilities of the colony. In other words: It's not nice to blow holes in the dome!

Players may rest assured that each planet will have its equivalent of speeding tickets, spitting on the sidewalks, and no-parking zones. This is left entirely up to the mission master and should usually be used as an excuse for a random encounter with a law officer or lawbreaker. Almost certainly murder, rape, various levels of theft, and kidnapping are against the law on any planet. The following table may be used to determine what the restrictions on weapons are and what the usual penalties for crimes may be.

Modifiers Based on Planet Type and Colony Type

	Planet Class		
Type	**5**	**6 7**	**4, 8 9**
Full Colony	-3	-4	-5
Agro Colony	-2	-3	-4
Pioneer Colony	+2	-1	-3
Industrial Colony	-3	-4	-5
Mining Colony	+1	-3	-4
Star Patrol Base	-4	-5	-5
Communications Station	0	-3	-5
Research Station	+1	0	-3

Weapons Restrictions (1d8)

Die Roll	Energy	Auto-Fire	Firearms	Blades	Carry & Conceal
1		—No Personal Weapons Permitted—			Unlawful
2	None	None	None	Registered	Unlawful
3	None	None	Registered	Registered	Unlawful
4	None	None	Registered	Okay	Unlawful
5	None	Registered	Registered	Okay	Discouraged
6	Registered	Registered	Okay	Okay	Dicsouraged
7	Registered	Okay	Okay	Okay	Discouraged
8		—No Weapon Restrictions—			Okay

Penalties (1d8)

Die Roll	Crime: Capital	Major	Petty
1	Death	Mindwipe*	Psychotherapy**
2	Mindwipe*	Psychotherapy**	Imprisonment 2d20 yrs
3-4	Mindwipe*	Imprisonment 1d20 yrs	Fines 1d10 x 100
5-6	Mindwipe*	Fines 1d20 x 100	Fines 1d10 x 10
7-8	Imprisonment 2d20 yrs	Fines 1d20 x 100	Fines 1d10 x 10

*Adult memories
**Memory/motivation

Here is a new skill table which includes several extra skills not covered in the original system. This is to allow for more diversified characters. Please note that a player should be allowed to roll on the OTHERS column, instead of a particular profession, but may do so for no more than ½ of their skill dice rolls.

AFV Driver. This skill enables the character to operate all types of military vehicles including tanks and armored personnel carriers. Each level of skill is a modifier to the character's safety rolls in accident situations.

Zero-Gee. This skill gives the character experience in moving under weightless conditions. Each skill level is a modifier when checking for injuries caused by moving in zero-gee.

Demolition. Characters having this skill are capable of preparing and detonating various kinds of explosive. Increased skill levels allow the character a wider range of experience and lessen the chance of an accident.

Hvy Equip Op. (Heavy Equipment Operator) This skill enables the character to operate bulldozers, earth movers, cranes, handling machines, and other types of heavy equipment. Increased skill levels widen the character's experience with heavy equipment and insure safer operation.

Revised Skill Tables

1d100 Roll	10	20	30	38	46	54	62	69	76	82	87	92	96	98	00
Skill Number	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15

	Soldier	Engineer	Scientist	Astronaut	Others
1	Ranged Wpns	Electronics	Sensors	Pilot	Contact Exp
2	H-H Combat	Sensors	Computer	Astrogation	Extra-Terre.
3	Contact Wpns	Computer	Contact Exp	Sensors	Underground
4	Survival	Hvy Equip Op	Medical	Computer	Lockpicking
5	AFV Driver	Maintenance	Biology	Zero-Gee	H-H Combat
6	Power Armor	Life Support	Astrophysics	Contact Exp	Contact Wpns
7	Zero-Gee	Thermonuclear	Anthropology	Survival	Ranged Wpns
8	Demolition	Zero-Gee	Linguistics	Ranged Wpns	Pilot
9	Sensors	Gravitics	Meterology	Gunner	Zero-Gee
10	Hvy Equip Op	Laser Science	Planetology	Contact Wpns	Survival
11	Maintenance	Hyperdrive	Chemistry	Medical	Computer
12	Fwrd Observ	Robotics	Electronics	Extra-Terr	Robotics
13	Communication	Extra-Terr	Extra-Terr	H-H Combat	Sensors
14	Medical	Power Armor	Robotics	Communication	Medical
15	Leadership	Demolition	Thermonuclear	Leadership	Linguistics

Fwrd Observ. (Forward Observer) This skill gives the character the specialized knowledge to call in long-range artillery and beam weapon fire for pinpoint accuracy.

Communication. This skill gives the character the ability to operate specialized communications equipment other than regular pocket communicators or telephones. This includes long-range radio gear, broadcasting equipment, holographic recording devices, and so on. Increased skill levels allow the character to use more sophisticated equipment and to use codes, cyphers, and special encoding equipment.

Robotics. This skill sllows the character to understand the basics of controlling robots, communicating with them, repairing them, and reprogramming them. Increased levels of skill allow the character to modify the efficiency roll for the robot when it attempts tasks that it is not normally programmed for.

Equipment

To the right is an expanded table of *Star Patrol* equipment and gear.

Biology. This is life sciences skill. Characters with Biology skill will be better able to identify creatures as to types and probable behavior. Increased levels of skill allow wider range of lifeform types, including those not of standard carbon-based systems.

Linguistics. This is the study of languages and other forms of communication that a race might possess. Persons with this skill will be able to translate various known languages and will have a much better chance of translating and learning new alien languages.

Meteorology. This skill gives the character the ability to determine weather patterns for different planets based on observation of the planet's atmosphere, rotation, temperature, and also by what types of star it orbits.

Lockpicking. This underground skill allows the character to be able to penetrate various locks, doorcodes, and safe mechanisms. Each skill level is a modifier to the chance to penetrate a particular device, or against the chance of setting off an alarm.

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Item	Mass	Initiation	Price	Notes
Biosensor	.5	–	350	Detects life forms up to 50 m. Must be set for different types of life forms.
Energy Sensor	.6	–	150	Detects and measures energy sources up to 1 km away.
Spectral Scanner	.8	–	200	Analyzes chemical and elemental composition up to 1 m.
Space Suit Repair Kit	.3	–	30	Repairs punctures and line failures. Type of suit must be specified.
Weapon Maintenance Kit	.4	–	15	Normal cleaning and maintenance tools. Type of weapon must be specified.
Electronics Maintenance Kit	.8	–	45	Circuit testing sensors, spare modules, tools.
Translator Module	.1	–	200	Module for hand computer. Translates known languages, helps linguist analyze alien languages.
Diagnostic Sensor	.5	–	100	Determines health status of specified life form.
Eva Maneuver Thruster Pack	1.0	-1	300	Fits onto back of space suit or life support unit. .2 g acceleration for up to 30 seconds.
Zero-Gee Tool Kit	1.0	–	180	Powered tools for weightless operation.
Cold Weather Gear	2.0	-2	150	Thermal gloves, jumpsuit, boots, hood, and face mask.
Fluoroscanner	.6	–	250	Device to see through other materials. Scan is blocked by heavy metals.
Holotaper	.4	–	150	Records 3D images on tape with playback capability.
Access Terminal	.1	–	200	Allows hand computer to tie in with main systems.
Super Glue	.02	–	1.5	Will bond most substances together, including flesh.
Scuba Gear	20.0	-2	250	Air tank, fins, mask for underwater, 2 hours.
Gill Breather Gear	5.0	-1	1000	Gill, fins, mask for underwater use.
Peepmap	.1	–	40	Small box containing a map which may be examined as if it were full-sized.
Sinclair Monofilament Wire	.2	–	500	Spool of 100 m with handle and illumination tab. Will cut through most substances and will support up to 500 kg before breaking.
Emergency Drug Pack	1.0	–	400	This is a military or restricted item consisting of a plastic case with a keyboard and grip. A small nozzle may be detached from the side to administer drug by air pressure. Always make a saving roll for allergic reaction. These drugs are designed for Terran humans or may be specified by other races. Each pack contains 3 doses of each drug.

Drug and Effects:

Countershock.* Prevents unconsciousness for 12 combat turns, or erases fatigue for 36 combat turns (3 game turns). Person must then rest for at least 6 hours.

Hypertime.* Enhances user's time sense, allowing him or her to perform up to 3 actions per combat turn, for 12 combat turns. Then a rest period of 6 hours must follow.

Antirad. Negates up to 2d6 radiation-caused damage.

Antitox. Negates up to 2d6 damage caused by poisons or other toxic substances.

Unitrank. Acts as a 3d6 stun attack.

Panabiotic. Halts infection of wounds and prevents bacterial and viral infection.

Booster.* Increases strength times 2 for 12 combat turns. Requires rest for at least 6 hours following use.

**Warning:* Double doses or contigual repeated doses require the character to make a 5d6 saving roll to prevent a 2d6 loss of strength, dexterity, and mentality.

Deus Ex Machina
The Computer as Familiar

by Bruce Webster

"fa-mil-iar . . . n. 1. A friend or close associate. 2. A spirit serving a witch, usu. in animal form." (Funk & Wagnalls Standard Desk Dictionary)

Wizards and witches, according to legend, used familiars – supernatural beings, usually in animal form – to help them in their work. These assistants aided in spell-casting, revealed secret knowledge to their masters, and generally took care of the minutiae that a mage didn't have time for.

The modern game master faces problems not unlike those of the magicians. He, too, must weave spells, transforming players into mighty heroes and leading them into extraordinary adventures. However, this can be tough, when he has to wade through cryptic tables, trackless rules, minutely detailed character descriptions and volumes of notes. The solution? Get a familiar. Not a cat or a toad or an imp, mind you, but a 20th century familiar: a personal computer.

The things which frustrate a game master – charts, tables, calculations, details – are the very things which a computer can handle well. With such a helper, a game master can pay more attention to important matters, such as creating interesting adventures.

In this column (and the next few) I'll explore ways you can develop your own silicon familiar.

Starting Your Design

Before you start writing, you should clearly decide (on paper!) just what this set of programs is supposed to do. In software engineering jargon, you "set down the program specifications." Before you can do that, you need to "define the system requirements," i.e., decide which tasks the compter should handle and which it shouldn't. One of the best ways to approach that problem is to make a list of everything that you want your system to tell you – in other words, define your output. Once you've decided everything that your system should tell you, that determines (1) what calculations and other data manipulations it will perform ("processing"), (2) what information it will have to save for later recall (the "data base"), and (3) what information you are going to have to give it at various times (the "input"). In short, your output defines the entire system. You can then decide how you want to implement that system.

Top Down Design

One other recommendation: Design from the top down and implement from the bottom up. "Top down design" means to start with a general description of your program, then break it down into several (say, two to eight) components, then break each of those down, and so on, until all of your components at the "bottom" are simple enough to be easily implemented. Such an approach does three important things. First, it allows you to break the program into portions that can be easily developed and tested. This is important when you're writing a large program, and doubly so when using a language that doesn't lend itself well to large, complex programs (such as Basic). Second, it helps to maintain unity in your program design by showing you how the different sections of the program relate to one another before you design them. Finally, it helps to identify functions which may be needed by several sections of the program. For example, you may find that you actually want to use a character generation routine in two different sections – for player characters and for non-player characters – which could affect just how you design that section of code.

There are actually two ways to implement your design. First, you can do a "top down" implementation, which just follows your design. You start by writing your main program, which calls "dummy" versions of your major subprograms. You then write each of the subprograms, which call dummy versions of their subprograms, and so on. This approach works very well in Fortran and Pascal, but not so well in Basic . . . which is what most of you will probably use. This brings us to the second technique, "bottom up" implementation. With this method, you start by writing and testing the small, simple program units at the very bottom of your design "tree." As you get a set of routines working, you can then design the unit "above" them, and so on up to the "top." This approach has a number of advantages. For one, at any given time you are working with a fairly small section of code which either stands by itself or calls other small sections of code which have already been debugged. Also, you can get certain portions of your system up and running before the entire system is finished.

Work for Your Familiar

The first, and (in some ways) most difficult, task in creating our familiar is deciding what it will and won't do. Most of us would like the help of a supercomputer with EEG interface, unlimited mass storage, and real-time color holography. Most of us currently have funny-shaped dice and lots of dead trees in the form of books, notes, forms, and game supplements. The familiar comes somewhere between the two, but where? The answer depends upon a lot of factors, including programming time and talent, hardware capabilities, and software development utilities. But we can examine some of the tasks commonly faced by game masters and see how well-suited they are to home computers.

One of the first tasks faced by a game master is that of "environment design," i.e., creating the dungeon, castle, city, world, or sector of the galaxy that your players will be traipsing around in. This task is also one of the most creative and time-consuming, simply because of the sheer amount of information that you have to deal with, if not actually invent. Unfortunately, it is also probably the most difficult to implement on a computer.

A first-level effort in this area would be to develop tools to help you generate your dungeon, etc. on paper. Most role-playing games have sets of tables to aid in environment generation. It should be fairly straightforward to write software to do all of your dice rolling for you and just give you the answers from the tables. This can be especially nice where the results from one table affect your calculations with the next one. For example, in

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SPI's ***Universe***, a planet's type (Earthlike, tolerable, hostile) affects atmosphere and temperature determination.

Some types of environment generation require a substantial amount of decision-making. Most of us would like some say in how a dungeon or a city is laid out. What we need is a sort of electronic drafting table, allowing us to piece together our dungeon (or whatever), providing random generation tables for when we need them and keeping track of it all, so that we can print it out or save to disk.

A more sophisticated system would not only help you generate your environment, it would also save the information in a form that could be updated during the actual game. Instead of referring to charts and maps, you could simply call up the information on your video display or make printouts for players.

The ideal system would not only do all of the above, it would "run" your private cosmos as a real world. It would note the passage of game time and update the environment accordingly. It would not only keep track of the current locations of your players' characters, but it would also note and update the locations of non-player characters. On a larger scale, the computer could simulate the effects of climate, economics, wars, and other matters outside the immediate scope of the game. In effect, your players would be wandering around a world within your computer.

Character Generation

Another common task is character generation. This is similar to environment generation; it mixes random characteristic tables with user interaction. There are also different levels of implementation. The simplest program would "roll dice" and look up information from tables. A more complex version would allow substantial interaction from the players or game master.

Many role-playing games require a lot of decision-making from the person creating a character. For example, in GDW's ***Traveller***, a player chooses what branch of the military to go into, picks skills after each 4-year term of service, and decided whether or not to re-enlist after each term. A person using a ***Traveller*** program would be shown his/her options at each point, and the program would duly note the choices made.

A more sophisticated program would not only create the characters but would also store them for use during the game. The game master wouldn't have to shuffle character sheets or index cards. He could simply call up the data onto the display screen and modify it as needed. A new copy of the character description could then be printed out for the player. The character information could also be accessed as needed by other programs, such as a combat-resolution program.

Our ideal system would not only do all of the above, it would also integrate the characters into their "world." It would note the effects of the passage of time (healing, aging, spell recovery). It would keep track of their movement. And it would update the information for each character with every combat or encounter.

The rest of the routines would be designed to handle the interactions that take place during the actual play of the game. One that I know most game masters would appreciate would generate random events and encounters, especially if it automatically determines the various characteristics of the 37 orcs that your players' party has just run into. There might also be "customized" routines designed for a specific setting. For example, one dungeon I designed has a set of identical rooms with the same jeweled pattern set into one of the walls of each room. Touching these jewels in one room causes the occupants of the room to be automatically transported to another one of the rooms, according to a rather complex pattern. I would have enjoyed having a routine to quickly calculate the destination when some players started playing around with the jewels.

Conclusion

Some months back, shortly after SPI's ***Universe*** came out, I set up an adventure for some non-gaming friends of mine. As the session progressed, things started to really drag, and some of the players were looking restless or bored. The game demanded such complex calculations for encounters, combat, et cetera, that I couldn't keep the game moving fast enough. Sensing an emergency, I stopped using all the complex formulae and tables and started using just a pair of percentile dice and my own imagination. The game immediately picked up, the players had an interesting (if somewhat lethal) adventure, and the evening ended well. The lesson? Role-playing games are worthless if they aren't interesting, and no amount of "realism" or "sophistication" can make up for that. If we as game masters wish to use more complex rules, we are going to have to find ways to keep those rules from interfering with the players' enjoyment of the game. Using computers as familiars is a solution which, I believe, will become more common as both RPGs and personal computers become more popular.

School Holiday

A CHAMPIONS Scenario

by Aaron Allston

HeroNet transmission 4/22/82 1:20 p.m.
From: Hilltop Precinct
To: Any available superpowered adventurer or team
Priority: Urgent
Unknown number of hostiles have seized Westbrook Junior High School, 1132 Woodhollow. Hostiles carry heavy armament and may be led by superpowered criminals. Police on scene. Please respond . . .

"School Holiday" is a ***Champions*** scenario for four to six heroes with a combined experience total of no more than 250. The GM should read the scenario through thoroughly and make any changes necessary to adapt it to his campaign. Persons intending to *play* in this adventure should read no further.

The Situation

Within Westbrook JHS are about 80 faculty members and 900 students. One student, Rick Tarrell, known as Airhead to his friends, is an emerging psionic of great potential, a wild talent. He doesn't know how he does what he does, just that he does it.

At 10:42 this morning, while he was studiously ignoring algebra, Rick let his mind wander across the city. He "saw" one mind of high intelligence, and tapped into it out of curiosity. But whoever he had encountered was violent, irrational, and evil, so Rick reflexively struck out at the mind and then withdrew, shaken, back to school.

At 10:42 this morning, the demonic villain Denier, flying over another part of the city, let out a wild yell and fell like a wounded bird to earth. Picking himself off the ground, he swore to avenge himself on whoever had assaulted him. With this in mind, he located his sometimes ally Scanner, a psi of some ability. "Find me this mind," Denier said, transmitting his memories of the encounter through Scanner's telepathic link.

Half an hour later, Scanner had managed to locate the mind – in a junior high school on the west side of town. Denier began talking with other allies and a mercenary group he occasionally dealt with.

At 1:12 that afternoon, four vans pulled into the Westbrook parking lot. The supervillains and mercs quickly entered the school and took it by force. Denier forced the faculty to summon everyone to the most secluded room in the school, the basement cafeteria. When all were assembled, Scanner reached out for the mind again – but found himself unable to determine exactly which person was Denier's assailant. Rick Tarrell, sensing the purpose of these well-known criminals, was staying quiet and trying to keep his mind shut tight.

So Denier split the group of students and faculty in half, and told Scanner to try again. After a few minutes, the psi said, "He's in the group to the left." The group to the right was dismissed, under guard, to be held in the gymnasium. Denier split the remaining group in two and told Scanner to try again . . .

What the Heroes Will Know

When the heroes arrive on the scene in response to the emergency broadcast – or whatever means the GM uses to slide them into the adventure – they will see the area depicted on Map A.

Westbrook is a one-story, mostly brick building which sprawls across one-fourth of a large city block in the middle of a residential neighborhood. The school proper takes up the northwest fourth of the block; the athletics field takes up another large chunk; there is a line of portable buildings just east of the school

building; east of that is the parking lot; and the rest of the block is clear schoolgrounds. There are no trees.

There is a police car at every "x" on Map A; every vehicle has two patrolmen with it. The grouping of three cruisers just north of Dunbar on Woodhollow is the command center, where Captain Marshall of the Hilltop Precinct is set up. Any well-regarded superhero will receive Marshall's cooperation, and even an unknown will have a good chance of it – the GM can make a subjective decision depending on the hero's COM and presentation.

The story from the police is this: At 1:15, Mrs. Laura Starling of 1633 Dunbar – just across the street from the school – phoned Hilltop to say she'd just seen five or six men with submachine guns and a colorfully-costumed man entering a door on the east side of the school, from the general direction of the parking lot. Two cruisers were immediately dispatched to the scene. Phone calls to the school went unanswered. One cruiser pulled into the bus lane in front of the school and was fired upon; its occupants were unhurt and hurriedly drove around the nearest corner. Several more units were dispatched to the scene, and the request for assistance went out over the HeroNet, the local hero communications network, or whatever the GM uses. Attempts at communication over the last few minutes have resulted in silence from the people holding the school. Observers have seen at least one armed man at every exterior door of the main building.

Heroes will probably want to make a quick look over the school. All the exterior doors of the main building – noted with "||"s on Map A – are of wire-reinforced glass set in heavy aluminum frames, offering good visibility but no impediment to bullets. There are windows around most of the school, except for the south wall west of the gymnasium and the west wall the length of the auditorium. (Refer to Map B.) Most of the windows are four feet long and two feet tall and run in a continuous chain (broken only by hallway doors) around the building, about three and a half feet from the ceiling of the rooms they lead to (which makes them just about eye level in most of the building, and some 3½" high – game scale – in the gymnasium). These windows are opaqued with paint, due to an administrative directive based on the notion that people shouldn't look out windows when in school. The school offices facing the building's west wall – (b) through (d) on the key for Map B – have large and fairly normal windows, which are currently covered by closed venetian blinds. All the windows in the school are closed.

Most of the building is 2" (game scale) tall; one section (which houses the auditorium and gymnasium) is 4" tall. To the east of the main building, west of the parking lot, is a grouping of five portable buildings, which are currently empty. They have normal and unblocked windows, so sharpsighted (or telescopic sighted) folk can see that they're empty.

The roof is cluttered with air conditioning units and other clumps of equipment. There is a hatch on the roof, at the point marked "H."

The entire building is surrounded by a sidewalk, which also runs up to the portable buildings.

Nothing but close examination will reveal the four mercenary vans in the parking lot for what they are. They are all painted differently, are *not* labelled "Soldiers of Fortune – Inquire Within," and do not have exposed weapon ports. They are indicated on Map B.

GM's Information

This was supposed to be a quick, simple vengeance on Denier's part – Scanner finds the transgressor, everyone storms the school, Denier tears the heart out of the transgressor, everyone leaves the school. Rick's obstinance in staying shielded has slowed down the proceedings drastically. Still, Denier and company do not expect interference by costumed do-gooders.

Characteristics for Denier and his allies are given later on in the supplement. His allies include Flare, a larcenous energy projector; Briareus, a hulking and mostly mindless android muscleman; Sliver, a professional assassin; the aforementioned Scanner; and Ali Baba's, an established organization of forty mercenaries. Denier brought along so many allies because he wanted the mind which assaulted him to have absolutely no chance of escape.

He did make one mistake, in that one entrance to the school is unguarded (although the heroes won't know this). Between the auditorium and the gymnasium is a small second floor, which contains storerooms only. One storeroom has an access hatch to the roof. This is kept locked, but any successful security systems roll will unlock any door in the building, and doors can always be broken.

An important element in this adventure is time. The HeroNet announcement was transmitted at about the time the faculty and students were gathering in the cafeteria. It will only require 10 divisions of hostages to find Rick, and by the time the heroes arrive on the scene, the first group of people should have been sent up to the gymnasium. It took Scanner several minutes to pick which of the first two groups Rick was in, but that amount of time becomes drastically reduced with each division. If the heroes wait too long before attempting something, the villains will simply kill Rick and make their break for it. If the GM wants to speed things up, he can have Rick telepathically call for help to someone outside. (In one playtest session, while the heroes were outside being briefed by Captain Marshall, one officer nearby suddenly said, "What do you mean there's not much time? Who said that?" When the heroes questioned him, he claimed that he was just hearing things. But the players got the message, loud and clear.)

Also, note that there's no one best way for the heroes to resolve the situation inside the school. A slam-bang frontal assault could throw the villains off balance – or enough of them could still be capable enough to follow the villain's directive and waste the hostages. A psychic hero could scan the mercs' minds and find out what's going on – but might be detected. The heroes could make their way in stealthily or invisibly – but might have no idea what to do once in.

The worst thing they could do, though, would be to go directly to the heart of the action. If the heroes were, say, to tunnel straight to the cafeteria, they'd be confronted by Denier and his four superpowered allies, plus five mercs and more every few seconds. The GM should not specifically keep this from happening – the nature of the scenario's setup is likely to prevent it. However, he should keep in mind that it could happen that way.

If the heroes need a little weight in their favor once they reach the cafeteria, there's always Rick Tarrell. If the heroes are doing just fine, he'll probably keep to himself. But if they're in bad shape – well, he has a vested interest in their victory. (In playtest, one hero missed his attack on a mercenary. The merc coolly switched his submachine gun to full automatic, swung it in line . . . the hero began sweating blood . . . and the merc staggered from a wholly unexpected mental assault from Rick. It made for a nice, dramatic moment, in keeping with comic book norms.) If the GM decides to use Rick on the side of the angels, the youngster will probably keep himself in a near-continual state of delay and use his mental attack only at the best possible times.

The probable reactions of the NPCs are given under their characteristics and histories. The GM will have to extrapolate their behavior, depending on how the heroes approach the situation.

Breaking Things

The "breaking things" notes here are based on the method introduced in the ***Champions*** scenario ***Stronghold***, where an object is considered to have a few points of resistant defense in addition to its body pip total.

Westbrook's exterior walls are concrete-reinforced brick – 8 PD/ED and 7 BODY. Exterior doors, the reinforced ones mentioned, are 3 PD/ED and 12 BODY. They have effectively no PD vs. missiles, and take ½ damage from missiles. The missiles continue on to do full damage to whatever they hit. Interior walls are PD/ED 5 and BODY 5; interior doors are PD/ED 5 and BODY 4, and have a small plastic window panel inset into them, 2' tall and 1' wide. Interior doors which are noted as being locked do not have these panels. If a door is unlocked and a character wishes to tear it from its hinges, it requires 4 BODY per hinge to do so (though this *may* be done in a single action).

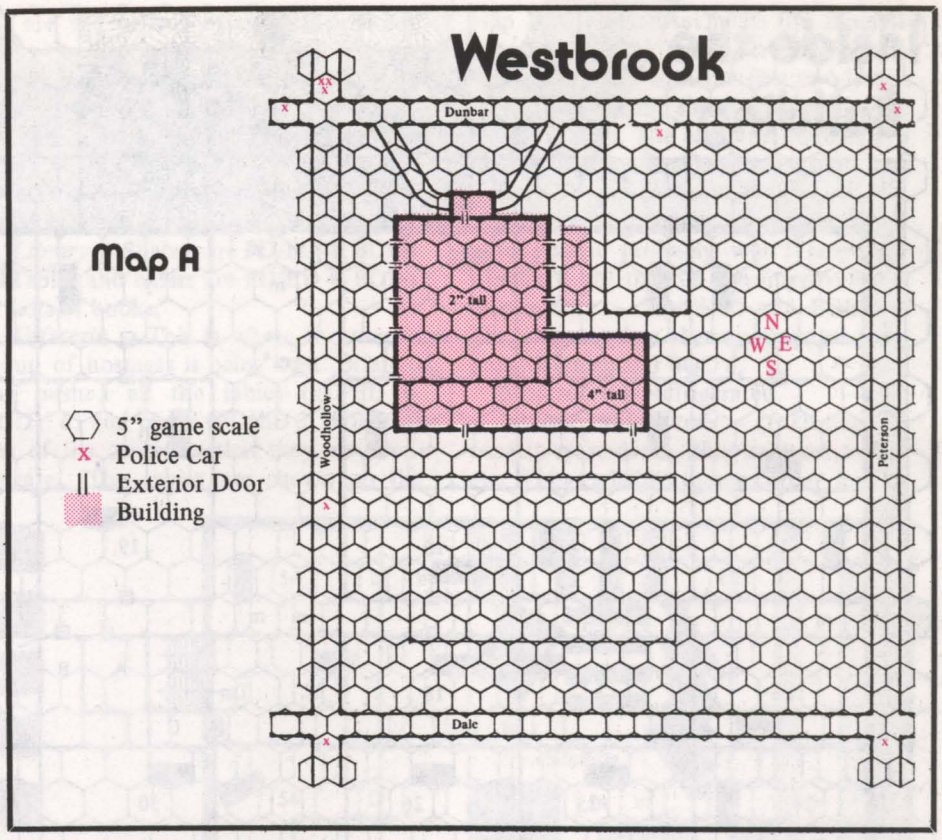
On the north side of the building is the school bus driveway, which has a concrete overhang where it passes in front of the building. The overhang is held up by a single massive concrete support (PD/ED 8 and 10 BODY), which is denoted by a black circle on Map B. If the support ever takes its BODY total, it is "wounded" like a human and will lose 1 BODY every post-segment 12 recovery phase; when it reaches -10, it collapses, and everyone under the overhang takes 9 dice damage from its collapse. The overhang weighs 12.5 tons and is considered an area effect attack.

Most of the rooms in the school are classrooms. They each have one instructor's desk, 20-30 students' desks, and one to three tables. On Map B, the expanded map of the school, only the instructor's desks are shown. If the battle action spills into the classrooms, roll 3d6 and add 15 for the number of student desks in the room; assign them, and 1d6 ÷ 2 tables, positions in the room. Student desks do not impede movement, especially in superhero brawls. Instructors' desks are PD/ED 6, BODY 6; student desks are PD/ED 3, BODY 2; tables are PD/ED 4, BODY 3.

A 3' by 6' (approximately ½" by 1", game scale) section of sidewalk outside weighs in the neighborhood of 300 lbs (requiring a ST of at least 15 to pick up). Since they're imbedded in the ground, the ST requirement to pry such a chunk free is 25. Sidewalk chunks are PD/ED 8 and BODY 6.

The Map

The way the map of the school – Map B – is used will vary depending on how



combat is conducted in the individual GM's campaign. The map presented here is shown with one hex equalling one game inch. It is drawn, though, so that it may easily be rendered onto a square grid. If combat is enacted with miniatures on an approximately-scaled board, the map will have to be drawn out in the expanded scale (we use a large sheet of hex paper, laminated so that we can draw on the terrain features in watercolor pens). If combat does not involve miniatures, but is only abstracted, with the GM keeping track of where everyone is, no such rendering is necessary.

These are the features of the map of Westbrook:

There is a mercenary on every hex labelled "m" on Map B. If they are only noted "m" they are the main force of submachine gunners; if they are "m*" they have grenades. See the individuals' stats for more details on that.

Every room in the building is unoccupied except those noted in the text as occupied. If the GM is curious about room contents or wishes to add atmosphere, the classrooms are of the following types:

Rooms 1-6:	English and linguistics
7-12:	Mathematics
13-18:	English and history
19-23:	Science
24-29:	History
30-35:	Science
36-39:	English
40-45:	Home economics, general use
46:	Gym showers
47:	Gym dressing room
48:	Anteroom
49-51:	Speech
52-53:	Music
54-56:	Social Studies
57-59:	English
60-64:	Health

Rooms labelled "A" are boys' bathrooms, "B"s are girls' bathrooms, and "C"s are janitors' storerooms, which are locked.

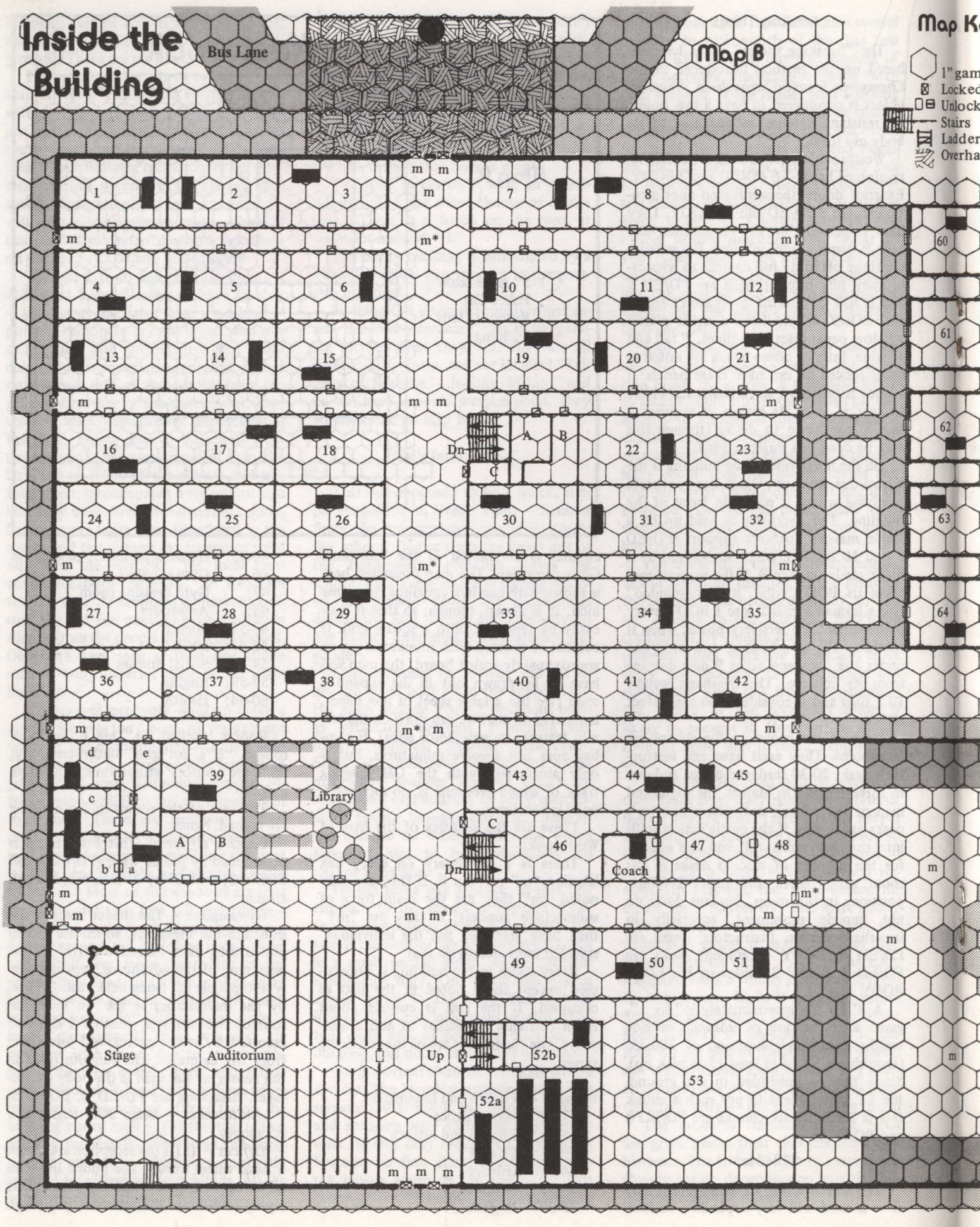
The rest of the rooms in the building are named. Notes:

Coach's Office – This little room is surrounded by prefab walls (PD/ED 2 and BODY 2) with 3' by 3' glass windows all around.

Gymnasium – The shaded areas to the sides are the bleachers, which are shown pulled into their extended form. At the beginning of the adventure, approximately 490 people are being held hostage here, by the mercenaries at the "m"s. Within four or five minutes, another 245 or so escorted by other mercs will join them from the cafeteria. The random mass in the center of the gym is the body of hostages. Bleachers are PD/ED 6, BODY 5.

Auditorium – Seats 300. Right now it's empty.

Offices – (a) is the reception area, with a desk where noted. The phone lines are all lit up with police and unaware callers trying to contact the school. (b) through


Inside the Building
Bus Lane
Map B
Map K
1" gam
Locked
Unlock
Stairs
Ladder
Overha
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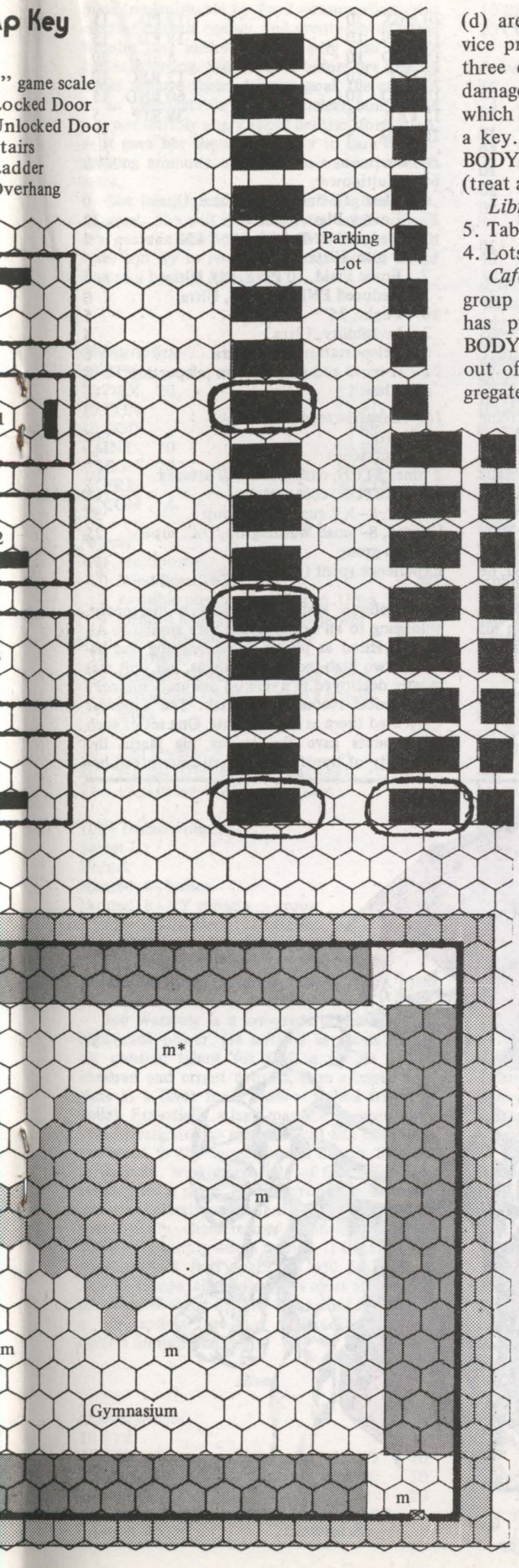
Dn
Up
Library
Coach
Stage
Auditorium



(d) are the offices of the principal and vice principals, which have one desk and three chairs (treat as student desks for damage) each. (e) is the teachers' lounge, which is locked; any faculty member has a key. It has four sofas – PD/ED 4 and BODY 6 – and a pair of small tables (treat as student desks).

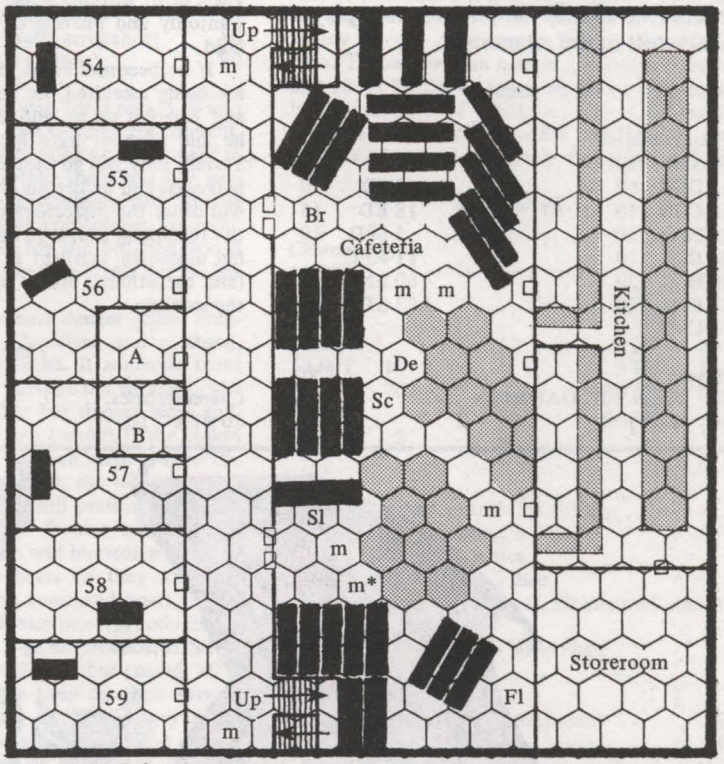
Library – Shelves are PD/ED 4, BODY 5. Tables and chairs are PD/ED 4, BODY 4. Lots of books.

Cafeteria – This is where the second group of hostages is being kept. Briareus has pushed all the tables (PD/ED 6, BODY 6) and chairs (PD/ED 2, BODY 4) out of the center so that they may congregate. (The tables are shown on the Map B cafeteria inset.) The five supervillains and five mercs are here. Their positions are noted, with the first two letters of a villain's name showing where he/she is on the map. The cafeteria doubles as a fallout shelter and is lead-lined, inhibiting X-Ray.

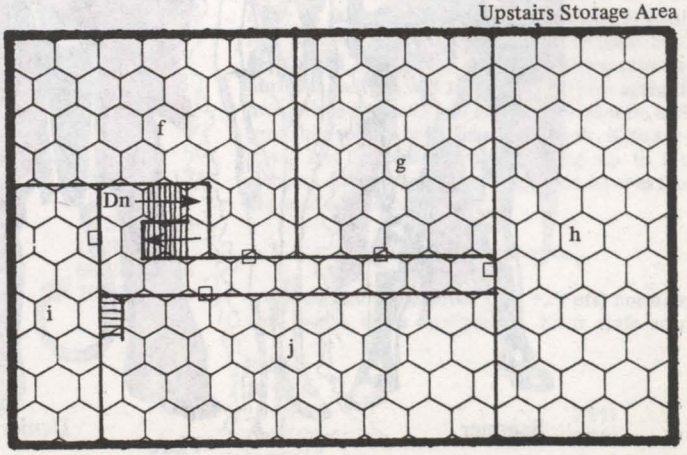
Kitchen – Kitchen equipment is not noted, as it probably won't enter the situation, but the GM can improvise if it is necessary – PD/ED 6 and BODY 7. The counters *are* shown; they have the same defenses and BODY.

Storeroom – Refrigerated.

Upstairs Storerooms – (f) through (j) contain spare desks, filing cabinets, tables, etc. (j) has a ladder in one corner, leading



Downstairs Cafeteria



Upstairs Storage Area

to an access hatch (like a regular door) on the roof. The stairway on the first floor that leads up the storerooms is in a little room which is kept locked.

The Parking Lot – The vans of the mercs are shown circled. There is nothing truly visible to differentiate them from ordinary vehicles, but a close look combined with a successful perception roll will reveal the fact that they are sitting much heavier than they should (because of the armor plating and weaponry on board).

The NPCs

Following are characteristics for, and notes on all the important non-player characters in the scenario.

Denier

Characteristics:

40 STR	30		
30 DEX	60	18 PD	10
15 CON	10	18 ED	15
15 BOD	10	5 SPD	10
20 INT	10	11 REC	
20 EGO	20	60 END	15
20 PRE	10	53 STP	20
10 COM			

Powers:		*END*
30	Flight 30", OAF wings	6
30	HTH Kill	
15	HTH Kill is armor-piercing	
10	Find Weakness	
15	Damage Resistance, ½ all	

100 + Disadvantages:

Unusual Looks 11–	10
Unluck	10
Public ID	10
2 times STUN, EGO attacks	20
Hunted, 8– NY superhero group	30
Irrational need for revenge when slighted or thwarted (very common)	20
Experience Used (villain bonus)	120

Not much is known about the Denier. It is theorized by the New York superhero community that he was a normal man at one time, who dealt with the occult and supernatural, and perhaps gained his new form and powers through a pact or service. In any case, he has been causing trouble for trouble's sake for a number of years now, working alone or with allies, killing wantonly and proving difficult to capture and hold.

If he becomes aware that his forces upstairs are being assaulted, he will send Flare, Sliver, and Briareus up to help the mercenaries; when he and Scanner have located and killed Rick Tarrell, they will go upstairs, too. If the cafeteria is assaulted before his objective is finished, he will order the mercenaries there to open fire on the remaining people in order to make sure that his unknown assailant is killed. Notes on his (and the others') escape plans are given later in the scenario.

Flare

Characteristics:

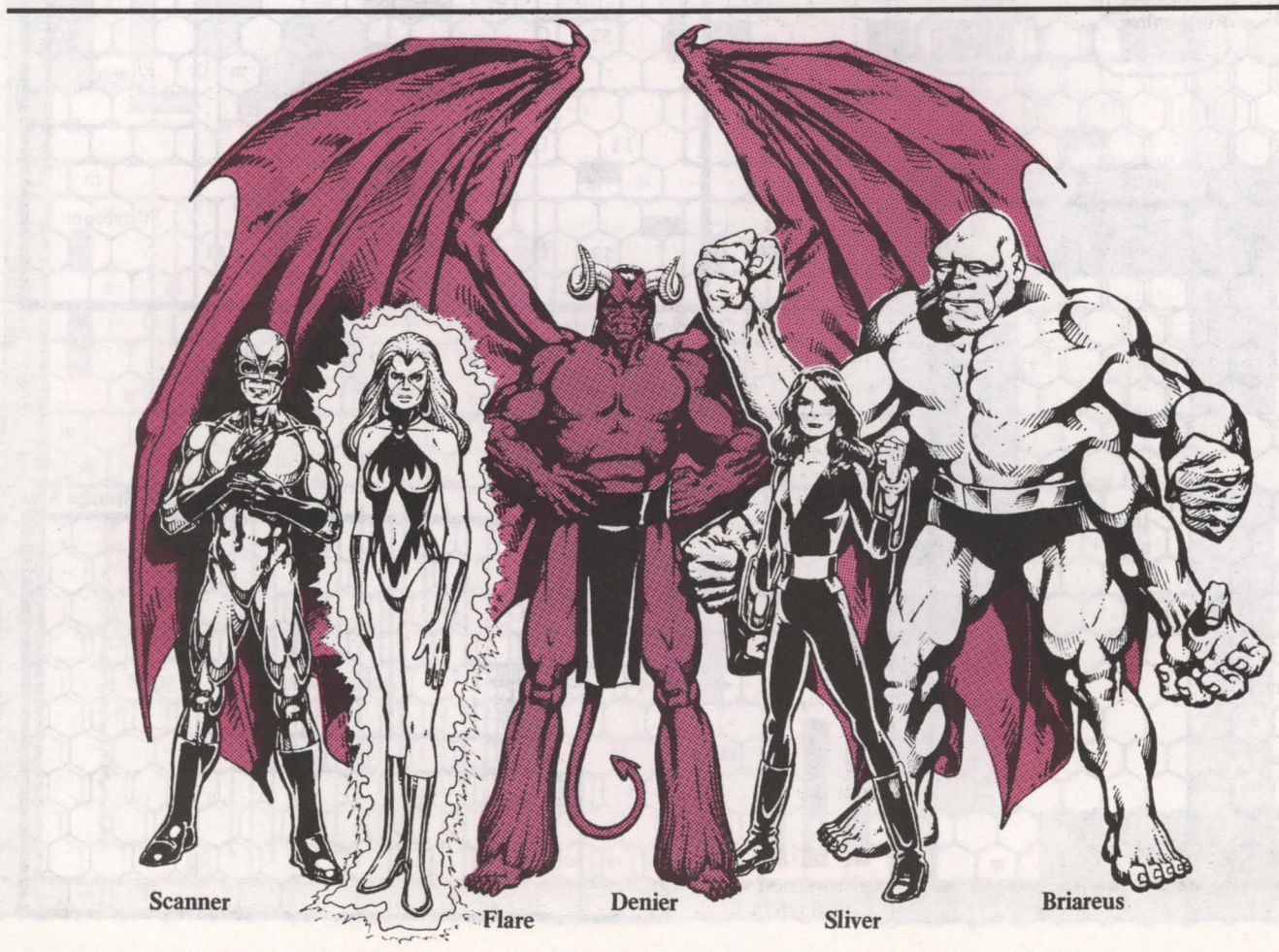
20 STR	10		
20 DEX	30	19 PD	15
15 CON	10	18 ED	15
15 BOD	10	5 SPD	20
20 INT	10	12 REC	10
15 EGO	10	60 END	15
15 PRE	5	38 STP	5
20 COM	5		

Powers:		*END*
60	Multipower	
6	Flash, 12 times/day, 6 dice, Ultra	0
12	Energy Blast, 12 dice	12
2	Reduced END with EB, 2 END at 8 dice, Ultra	2
2	Force Field, 10 PD & ED, Ultra	4
2	Reduced END with FF, Ultra	0
10	Flight, 25"	5
2	Invisibility, Ultra	4
3	Teleportation, 15", Ultra	6
1	½-move and attack when teleporting, Ultra	2

100+ Disadvantages:

Public ID	10
Overconfidence	20
2 times STUN, darkness-motif attacks	10
2 times STUN, cold attacks	10
Hunted, 8– NY superhero group	30
Hunted, 8– small Washington, D.C. superhero group	25
Experience spent (villain bonus)	65

Angelique Marin was once a mercenary, belonging to an organization very similar to Ali Baba's. Hired as pawns in an ongoing war between two high-tech supervillains, her unit was mostly destroyed in a raid on one archcriminal's biochemical reconstruction lab. The survivors were used there as experiments. One set of such experiments gave the guinea pig Marin the capability of transforming small amounts of her



mass (replenishable by food consumption) into electromagnetic energy, and eventually of transforming her entire body briefly into energy and teleporting. She escaped before her captors could achieve their ultimate goal, the creation of an undetectable human nuclear bomb. She was not terribly angry about her transformation, as it gave her the opportunity to earn ever-increasing amounts of money as a superpowered merc.

She is a professional and is being well-paid, as usual. She will risk her life to achieve Denier's goals in this adventure; if he falls, she will leave and try to rescue him later (as this would lead to a healthy bonus).

Scanner

Characteristics:

10 STR			
20 DEX	30	12 PD	10
10 CON		12 ED	10
10 BOD		4 SPD	10
20 INT	10	14 REC	20
20 EGO	20	50 END	15
10 PRE		20 STP	
18 COM	4		

Powers:		*END*
100	Multipower	
10	Mind Scan 10d6	10
2	Invisible power – mind scan, Ultra	0
4	Ranged Kill, 2d6, invisible power effects (neural disruption)	6
10	Telepathy 10d6	10
2	Invisible power – telepathy, Ultra	0
2	Invisibility (clouding men's minds), Ultra	4
10	Ego Defense +14	
20	Martial Arts (+1 times damage)	
21	+7 skill levels with mind scan	

100+ Disadvantages:	
Secret ID	15
Unluck	5
Hunted, 8- police	20
Hunted, 8- NY superhero group	30
2 times STUN, electrical attacks	20
Overconfidence vs. heroes and police (irrational)	20
Experience Spent (villain bonus)	100

Joe Warriner is a low-grade criminal with a high-grade power. He noticed as a small child his unusual talent for finding people – lost children and errant cousins, then escaped convicts as a favor for a close-mouthed friend at Joliet. Essentially a lazy man, he became a private investigator to earn the rent and circulated the word in the supercriminal circuit that he, as Scanner, was in the field of finding missing persons for a price. He is a cynical, conscienceless man, utterly without the flair or evil intent that usually characterizes a villain of similar power. He simply wants money. If the situation at Westbrook falls apart, he will do his level best to escape, abandoning his allies at the drop of a hat. Walking out the front door invisibly is a fair option for him. If attacked, he will defend himself, naturally.

Sliver

Characteristics:

10 STR			
30 DEX	60	12 PD	10
15 CON	15	13 ED	10
10 BOD		6 SPD	20
10 INT		10 REC	10
10 EGO		40 END	5
10 PRE		28 STP	5
20 COM	5		

Powers:		*END*
60	(90) Multipower – OIF (wrist bracers)	
4	(6) Ranged Kill, 4d6 (flechette needle burst), Ultra	12
2	(3) ¼ END with ranged kill, Ultra	3
2	(3) Explosive power with ranged kill (diffusion of burst)	6
2	(3) Invisible power effects with ranged kill (extra velocity with pneumatic charge)	0
40	Danger Sense	
30	Martial Arts (+2 times damage)	
15	Armor +15 PD, OAF costume	

100+ Disadvantages:	
2 times STUN, physical killing attacks	30
Secret ID	15
Likes to kill (common, irrational)	15
Hunted, 8- by KGB (large, agents)	20
Hunted, 8- by CIA (large, agents)	20
Unusual looks 11- (actually arrogance)	10
Experience Spent (villain bonus)	80

Catherine Albrecht was, for a period of two years, an agent of the East German government. A year ago, she badly bungled an assignment in South America, and rather than face her government's inevitable retribution, fled to the U.S. to make her mark as a professional assassin. The KGB is after her for the botched South American effort, and the CIA wants her for her Iron Curtain activities.

She has a phenomenal danger sense, compounded of paranoia, hunches, and a strong, mostly latent, psi potential. If someone turns on N-Ray vision and surveys the cafeteria, she will feel it if she makes her danger sense roll. She will immediately tell Denier. If she makes her roll well enough and can sense where the source of the observation is, she will relay this information as well; she will presume that it is an audio-pickup device. Denier will issue an order to his mercs, who will immediately shout to the area of the viewers (if they know it, otherwise to the police command post), "Shut off your surveillance device or everybody dies." Elapsed time: about 5 game seconds. If Sliver indicates that the surveillance has ceased, all is as it was. If the heroes keep up their surveillance, Denier will order all the hostages in the cafeteria shot. He doesn't bluff. If the heroes were, say, on the roof or within the building when the surveillance is detected and Sliver can determine this, she will tell Denier, who will fathom that it must be extraordinary agents and/or superheroes and will have the mercs attack.

There are few things Sliver loves as much as a good fight. She's likely to ride out the entire clash in the school, not attempting to escape until things are hopeless.

Briareus

Characteristics:

60 STR	50		
10 DEX		25 PD	13
20 CON	20	19 ED	15
20 BOD	20	3 SPD	10
5 INT	-5	16 REC	
5 EGO	-10	60 END	10
10 PRE		70 STP	10
4 COM	-3		

Powers:		*END*
20	Two extra arms	
30	¼ END cost with STR	
10	Life Support	
15	Damage Resistance, ½ all	
25	+5 skill levels in HTH combat	

100+ Disadvantages:	
2 times STUN, EGO attacks	20
2 times STUN, energy killing attacks	30
Unluck	15
Unusual looks 11-	10
Berserks 14- (8- recover) in combat or if allies injured	20
Hunted, 11- by minions of the Craftsman (supervillain group)	35

Briareus is the latest in a long line of "muscle" androids fabricated by the Craftsman, a supplier of quality goons to supervillains for 20 years. The androids are created, trained, and sold as specialty agents and bodyguards. Briareus was lost in transit from the factory to the kennels – part of the truck carrying him and part of its driver were found. Denier found him meandering along a back-country road in the Appalachians. He has trained Briareus to follow simple commands: "Kill police. Beat hero. Throw car. Use napkin." Briareus follows and obeys Denier as a dog would its master; he is not capable of initiative. The Craftsman, however, occasionally makes attempts to retrieve his lost and extremely valuable creation.

Rick Tarrell

Characteristics:

10 STR			
10 DEX		2 PD	
10 CON		2 ED	
10 BOD		4 SPD	20
20 INT	10	9 REC	10
20 EGO	20	40 END	10
10 PRE		20 STP	
14 COM	2		

Powers:	
90	Elemental Control: Psi abilities
	(1) Mind Scanning, 9 dice
	(2) Telepathy, 9 dice
	(3) EGO Attack, 3 dice
45	Invisible power effects, Elemental Control
5	Ego Defense +9
9	+3 skill levels with Mind Scan

100+ Disadvantages:	
Code vs. killing, total commitment	20
Unluck	5
2 times STUN, physical killing attacks	30
1½ times BODY, physical killing attacks	15
Dependent NPC (father) normal, 8-	10
Hunted, 8- Denier	20
Hunted, 8- psi studies institute	20

As noted, Rick is an emerging psi of great potential. He's no superhero – he'd be put away as fast as or faster than any other normal in a hand-to-hand contest. He has decided that his special talents are extremely dangerous to him and that he will not practice them again if he survives the next half hour, a decision he will probably retract sometime next week, if he survives. But he will not go charging up to his rescuers (if any arrive) and say that he was the cause of all the furor.

Police and Mercenaries

These are all talented (i.e., +20 pts) normals with some extra equipment. Their stats are:

Police:

10 STR			
10 DEX		7 PD	5
10 CON		2 ED	

10 BOD
10 INT
10 EGO
10 PRE
10 COM
3 SPD 10
4 REC
30 END 5
20 STP

Equipment (powers):
8 Heavy pistol (6 shots)
10 Shotgun (6 shots)

Disadvantages: None needed

Mercenaries:
10 STR
15 DEX 15
10 CON
10 BOD
10 INT
10 EGO
10 PRE
10 COM
2 PD
2 ED
3 SPD 5
4 REC
20 END
20 STP

Equipment (powers):
30 Submachine gun – 2d6 ranged kill, 50 shots, selective autofire, OAF
16 Flak suit (8 PD/ED with 14– activation)
1 Radio hearing, OAF (walkie-talkies)

Disadvantages: None needed

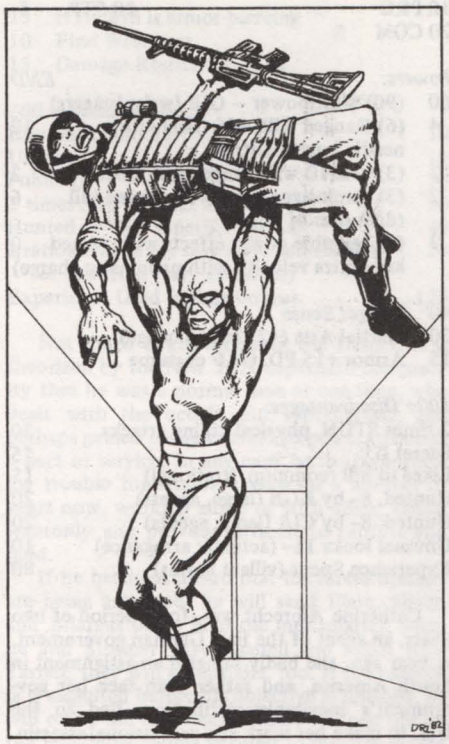
Merc Grenadiers:
10 STR
10 DEX
10 CON
10 BOD
10 INT
10 EGO
10 PRE
10 COM
2 PD
7 ED 5
3 SPD 10
4 REC
20 END
25 STP

Equipment (powers):
8 Heavy Pistol (6 shots)
15 3 Grenades, 2d6 explosive kill
15 3 Grenades, 6d6 explosive energy blast
1 Radio Hearing, OAF (walkie-talkies)

Disadvantages: None needed

The police are going to sit back and wait for instructions from the heroes before doing anything. If any of the mercs or villains leave the school before such instructions are received, the police will command the villains to halt, drop weapons, etc.; if the villains don't, they will be fired upon. Each van that leaves the parking lot will be pursued by two patrol cruisers, and more cruisers will be called on to give pursuit from other areas.

The mercenaries stationed in the school are under orders to kill anyone wandering around unguarded or unauthorized. This includes superheroes, police, janitors, etc. They are kept in communication via their walkie-talkies, and most mercs are within sight of at least two of their allies at all times. (See their setup positions on Map B.) If an attack is launched by the heroes, the mercs will attack to kill. Situation permitting, they will try to keep at least 3-5" away from any hero, firing from a kneeling position upward so as not to catch their allies in a burst. A submachine gunner will generally shoot once on a single-shot action, judge the effect of that on the hero, and (if necessary) turn over to full autofire. A grenadier will not drop a grenade on a hero while any of his allies is in dangerous proximity if it can be helped. If more than half the mercs are downed and Denier ceases responding to the walkie-talkies, a general evacuation will be called for and the surviving members of Ali Baba's will make a break for the vans.



The Vans

The mercs and villains have four vans available to them. The vans are different in appearance, but identical in function.

Their characteristics:

40 STR (necessary for computing move-through damage – hit-and-runs)
15 BOD (taking that amount will render them disfunctional; they do not get wounded like characters)
15 PD (fully resistant; bought as armor)
10 ED (ditto)
6 SPD (necessary for computing movement rates)

They also have the following armaments:

Machine Gun – One .50-cal is mounted in a retractable turret. When the turret is activated, it rises through a hatch in the van roof; the mercenary operating it is still protected by the van's armor. The turret may be swivelled in a 360° arc. It is a normal ***Champions*** machine-gun – 100 shots, selective autofire, 2½d6 killing damage per shot. The turret, though, has a built-in laser targeting system, equivalent to +4 skill levels in machine gun, plus an IR vision scope.

Mines – A mechanism at the rear of the van, at the touch of a dashboard button from the driver, will release mines onto the roadway behind. These may be dropped one at a time or all at once (as per selective autofire). The mine has a 3-second fuse. It is a 12d6 explosive energy blast, which is designed primarily to wreck the street and make it impassible, though it is pretty effective at killing people and wrecking cars.

The vans can travel 50" per phase, 25" per phase if heavy maneuvering is called for. They weigh 3.2 metric tons each.

Escape from Westbrook

As noted, everyone's original intent was to raid the school, kill the wild talent, and leave in a hurry. Obviously, it hasn't worked out that way. The police present no great threat – the mercs were going to charge back out to their vans, climb in, and drive off while Denier and Flare provided cover by keeping the police off their backs. It's more likely that those who get away will grab the vans and try to juggernaut their way to safety. The GM would have to improvise this – an entire city map for the characters to wage a running battle upon is simply too much for the cramped pages of TSG. Westbrook could exist in any city of 20,000+ people; the GM has to decide where he's placing the school and then work around his decision if the action spills into the surrounding neighborhoods.

Altering the Scenario

There are any number of variations which can be applied to this scenario. The GM can alter the number and/or nature of the supervillains in the group, if he wishes to toughen or weaken them against a specific set of heroes. If one hero is of junior high age, he could attend Westbrook and be caught along with Rick Tarrell, and prove a most unwelcome "mole" to Denier when the action starts. The very reason for Denier's seige could be altered; the school makes a decent superhero playground whatever the reason. Or, one or more of the villains' hunteds could show up, further complicating the situation.

Aftermath

After all the action has settled down, the heroes are likely to be curious about what started it all. Rick isn't talking. The villains and mercs, if any are captured, won't talk. If telepathy isn't used, the meaning behind the whole thing could remain a mystery, perhaps for the heroes to solve at a later time. If Denier escapes and Rick remains alive, the supervillain is obviously going to try to kill him another time, which could lead to another adventure. In any case, this scenario was specifically written to be adaptable to most peoples' campaigns and *remain* a part of the campaign, if the GM so wishes.

THE BIG SHIPS

IN SPACE OPERA

by Stefan Jones

The starship-design rules in ***Space Opera*** are a detailed, interesting way to "build" spaceships from tiny sloops to million-ton battlestations. A few examples of ship design are included, but they are of small size – not representative of the huge starships-of-the-line fielded by the major interstellar powers. The guidelines below should help star masters in designing the big ships.

The most important method of classifying ships is by their size. The chart below gives rough size-ranges of the various ship classes.

Size (tons)	*Class*
2,500-5,000	Corvettes
5,000-15,000	Frigates
10-20,000	Patrol Cruisers
20-50,000	Cruisers
50-125,000	Fleet Cruisers
125-500,000	Battle Cruisers
200,000+	Battlestarships
500,000+	Battlestars

In addition to size, the equipment and proportion of armor to size to weaponry is very important in determining a ship's class. There are four categories of ship "duty type":

Battlewagons are ships of the line, built for combat and little else. They have the maximum weaponry for their size and sacrifice speed for heavy armor protection. Most ship systems have backup equipment. Fleet cruisers, battlestarships, and some cruisers are "battlewagons."

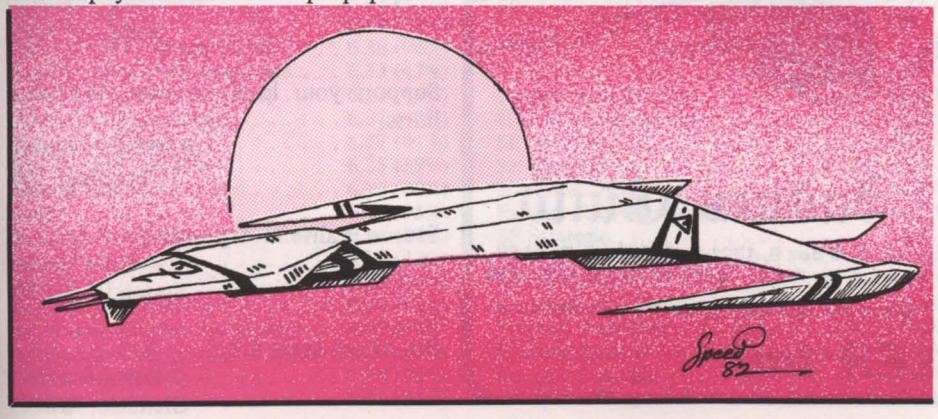
Frontier and *patrol ships* include patrol cruisers, battle cruisers, and most frigate-sized and smaller vessels. Their primary asset is speed; virtually no armor over the base armor-class is included. They have the maximum weaponry for their size and enough cargo space to carry the supplies needed for long missions away from supply bases. The scout, contact, and intelligence branches of a star-nation's service use these types of vessels.

Carriers sacrifice STL maneuverability for the ability to carry large complements of starfighters. The battlestar is the prime example of a carrier. Heavy weaponry is sometimes deleted from carrier designs to allow even more fighters to be carried.

Utility ships include hospital ships and fuel carriers. They lack heavy weaponry and armor, but are often very fast, to allow them to reach critical areas quickly. Most are under 10,000 tons. Troop transports are included in this category. The latter are either small, streamlined and agile frigates designed to drop PAPA-equipped marines in drop capsules, or giant bulkers that depend on shuttles to land their cargo of armsmen.

Special Rules

These additional rules should help make naval vessels more realistic.



Starfighters. Individual starfighter bays are large enough to carry the fighter, plus launch and repair facilities. When many bays are carried on a ship, some of the equipment may be combined, allowing more fighters to be carried. For every 10 bays carried by a ship, a single launch tube may be included to serve all 10 starfighters in those bays. This allows a 20% reduction in individual bay sizes. The tube costs as much as two of the bays it is serving. Note that the *cost* of the bays remains the same after the reduction; they merely take up less space. The tube itself takes up no additional space. Separate repair facilities may also be built, further reducing individual bay size by an additional 10%. Repair facilities mass and cost the same as one bay of the size required for the fighters being serviced. One separate repair facility may service as many fighters as are carried by a ship; however, repair time to fix damaged fighters is doubled when separate repair facilities are being used, as only one fighter at a time may be serviced. Separate repair facilities are therefore most effective in situations in which space is a more important consideration than repair time. When large numbers of starfighters are carried, it is recommended that several separate repair facilities be utilized in case one is knocked out in combat. For more information on starfighters, see FGU's ***Ground and Air Equipment.***

Supplies. Most of the crew needs on a ship are met by on-board recycling equipment. Some items, however, must be carried. Approximately 2 kg of supplies are required per day by each crewman. Active combat troops require 5 kg a day, more for heavily armed troopers.

Shipboard troops are either naval crewmen trained in security, or marines. The former are armed with relatively light weapons and wear armored space suits. They are carried on ships on duty in civilized areas, on "utility" vessels, and when marine troops are needed for more pressing work. Marines are carried on almost all large ships (over 10,000 tons) and on smaller vessels traveling into the unknown. Marines have the best weapons and armor available, as well as superb training. Space requirements are as for regular crew in SO.

Organization of Squadrons. Ships of the line often travel in groups of up to ten ships, plus auxiliary craft. Frontier ships almost always travel alone, though battlecruisers sometimes have one or two frigate-sized courier vessels to "run errands" while the main ship is busy. During wartime, organization is highly variable. Generally, strike forces of frontier ships make raids, while ships of the line slowly advance toward the action.

Dungeon Graffiti Contest Results

Behold: the results of the Dungeon Grafitti contest (Issue 47). Readers were asked to submit scrawlings appropriate for the walls of their favorite castle, tavern, or medieval hole in the ground. There were a lot of creative replies: we judged this one by going over all the entries, circling everything that was especially original/funny/clever, and then counting the circles.

First place (a year's worth of TSG) went to the ubiquitous Jay Rudin (Dallas, Texas), who has announced his intention of winning a lifetime of TSG through these contests. His entry included:

Grendel: come home. Your mother wants you.

Call Achred the Herbalist for a good thyme!

Dan'l, Earl of Boone, kilt an owlb'ar here!

Some come here to test their skill
Others come to fight and kill
But I come here to loot the halls
And read the writing on the walls.

And, to top it off, a genuine example of the "double dactyl" school of doggerel:

Chivalry, Schmivalry!
Roger the thief has a
method he uses for
sneaky attacks:
Folks who are reading are
Characteristically
Always forgetting to
Guard their own bac . . .

Second place (six issues) goes to Thomas Cornwell, of Bluefield, West Virginia:

Clerics do it in church.

If you can stick your sword through this boulder, I'll call you "Sir Arthur" for the rest of the day.

A kobold is a halfling that likes to hold his breath.

A dead kobold is a halfling that held it too long!

Runners-up included:

Conan's sword is smarter than he is.

Is there intelligent life in this dungeon?

Not if you entered willingly!

—Don Marshal
Titusville, Florida

Flasho can't read a "Write" spell!

Well, Blitzo can't remember a "Forget" spell!

—Richard Wolfe, Jr.
Ft. Worth, Texas

Did you hear about the hobbit who walked into the bar with a parrot on his shoulder? The bartender said, "That's amazing! Where did you get it?" "The Shire," replied the parrot. "There are millions of them there."

Snow White was pure . . . but has since drifted.

—Jamie M. Fish
Louisville, Kentucky

If you can read this, the spiked, 5-ton rock slab falling on you won't miss.

—Paul Manz
Union, NJ

Yngvi is a louse!

—Ted M. Trimbath
Columbus, Ohio

Smaug gargles with Drano!

—Ken & Angel Mitchell
Sunnyvale, California

This is not a secret door.

—Chris Robbins
San Diego, California

If you are reading this, the next thing you'll see is a glyph of *BOOM*

—Bart Kemper
Fort Hamilton, NY

Assassins do it from behind.

—Craig Schmidt
Houston, Texas

Support your local vampire. Give till it hurts.

—Richard Pichowski
Brooklyn, NY

Sauron is alive in Argentina!

—Dave Gentile
Staten Island, NY

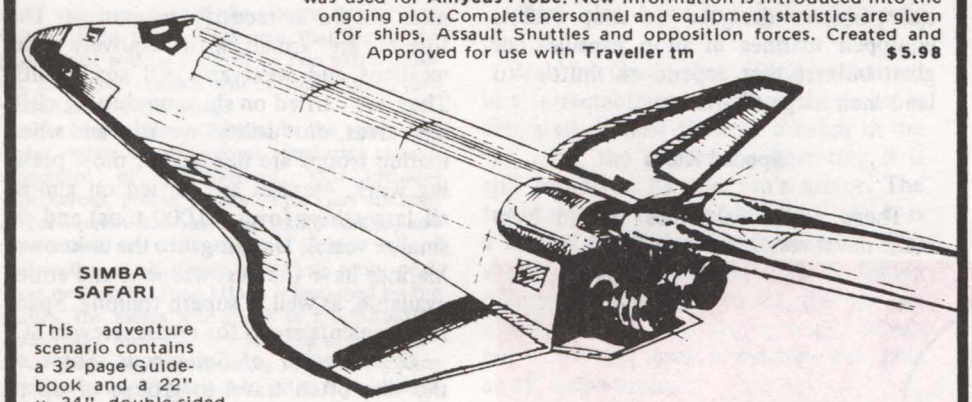
I'm a born again druid.

—David Burkhart
Glendale, Arizona

ADVENTURE TO THE STARS!

ROGUE MOON OF SPINSTORME

This 32-page adventure continues as the second in the Border Prowler Adventure Series set in the Gateway Quadrant. Though intended to be played as the second in a series, this adventure may be played on its own. The same personnel and equipment is used for this as was used for **Amycus Probe.** New information is introduced into the ongoing plot. Complete personnel and equipment statistics are given for ships, Assault Shuttles and opposition forces. Created and Approved for use with **Traveller tm** **$5.98**



SIMBA SAFARI

This adventure scenario contains a 32 page Guidebook and a 22" x 34" double-sided Map sheet. Set in the Ley Sector of the Gateway Quandrant, the adventure features the "Simba Safari" and crew. Complete 15mm plans of the Type K Hunter Ship are included, as is a 15mm scale plan of the adventure site. Created and Approved for use with **Traveller tm.** **$5.98**

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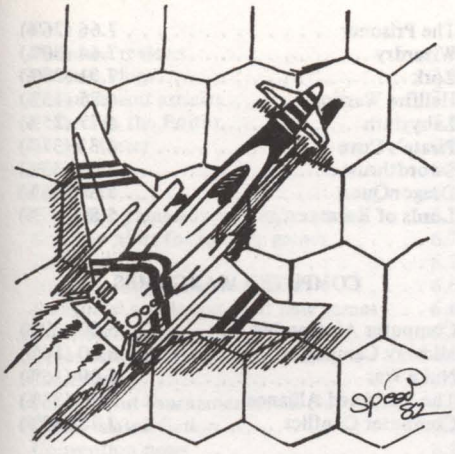

1981 Game Survey Results

The 1981 Game Survey appeared in the January issue (47) of TSG. 186 replies were received. Readers were asked to rate the publishers, magazines, and games on a scale of 1 to 9, with 9 being the highest. If readers had never heard of a game, they were asked, not to rate it, but to give it an X. The percentage following the rating represents "X" results – people who never heard of it.

Where ratings were equal, the games or companies were listed in alphabetical order.

PUBLISHERS

CE Software 8.00 (51%)
Sir-tech Software 7.63 (48%)
Game Designers' Workshop 7.56 (03%)
Hero Games 7.52 (40%)
Steve Jackson Games 7.43 (03%)
Nova Game Designs 7.36 (27%)
Ral Partha Enterprises 7.35 (08%)
Chaosium 7.33 (05%)
Task Force Games 7.10 (04%)
Gamelords, Ltd. 7.09 (30%)
Superior Models 7.08 (32%)
California Pacific 7.07 (42%)
Paranoia Press 7.03 (12%)
Adventures by Mail 7.00 (51%)
Timeline 6.93 (42%)
Big Five Software 6.85 (39%)
Metagaming 6.84 (03%)
Games Workshop, Ltd. 6.83 (03%)
Epyx 6.81 (30%)
Clemens & Associates 6.75 (37%)
Automated Simulations, Inc. 6.69 (18%)
Marischal Adventures 6.66 (46%)
Midkemia Press 6.66 (33%)
FASA 6.64 (23%)
Muse Software 6.61 (34%)
Avalon Hill 6.50 (03%)
Eon Products 6.50 (12%)
Level-10 . . . . . 6.50 (53%)
Yaquinto 6.49 (05%)
Med Systems Software 6.42 (52%)
Strategic Simulations 6.42 (35%)
Palladium Books 6.40 (39%)
Simulations Publications, Inc. . . . 6.36 (06%)
Conflict Interaction Associates . . . 6.33 (47%)
Creative Wargames Workshop 6.33 (49%)
Adventure International 6.31 (49%)
Fantasy Modeling 6.27 (41%)
Iron Crown Enterprises 6.25 (29%)
Fantasy Games Unlimited 6.16 (08%)
Atari 6.15 (05%)
Manzakk Publishing 6.14 (54%)
Baron Publishing 6.11 (42%)
Archive 6.00 (26%)
Boynton & Associates 6.00 (61%)
1st Edition Graphic Art Studios . . 6.00 (59%)
Synergistic Solar 6.00 (57%)
Simulations Canada 5.88 (30%)
Heritage 5.86 (06%)
TSR Hobbies 5.83 (03%)
Flying Buffalo, Inc. 5.80 (05%)
Mayfair Games 5.80 (30%)
Judges Guild 5.78 (05%)
Creative Computing 5.75 (27%)
The Gamemaster 5.75 (36%)
Edu-Ware Services 5.73 (32%)
Integral Games 5.66 (62%)
Game Merchant 5.61 (36%)
Instant Software 5.59 (49%)
Reston Publishing 5.55 (54%)
The Programmers' Guild 5.50 (54%)
Zocchi Distributors 5.50 (10%)
Schubel & Son 5.27 (09%)
Adventure Games 5.19 (36%)
Acorn 5.16 (59%)
Emprise Game Systems 5.16 (48%)
Grimoire Games 4.96 (18%)
Athena Games 4.90 (44%)
Personal Software 4.87 (39%)
The Mishler Company 4.83 (50%)
Krell Software 4.80 (56%)
Ramware 4.71 (56%)
The Alternate Source 4.59 (58%)
Computer War Games 4.59 (53%)
C-T Simulations 4.50 (49%)
Powersoft 4.16 (48%)
World Campaigns 4.14 (57%)
Dimension Six 4.04 (16%)
The Buchanan Co. 4.00 (54%)
Purser's Magazine 4.00 (58%)
Zorph Enterprises 4.00 (42%)
Group One 3.70 (23%)
Superior Simulations 3.70 (46%)

MAGAZINES

The Space Gamer 7.94 (01%)
Journal / Traveller's Aid Society . . 7.36 (02%)
High Passage 6.95 (13%)
White Dwarf 6.78 (05%)
Different Worlds 6.41 (12%)
Sorcerer's Apprentice 6.35 (09%)
Dragon 6.32 (02%)
Interplay 5.93 (15%)
Gryphon 5.87 (15%)
Adventure Gaming 5.80 (19%)
Purser's Magazine 5.59 (51%)
Ares 5.34 (04%)
Game Merchant 5.10 (33%)
Pegasus 5.05 (21%)
Flying Buffalo Quarterly 4.78 (12%)
For Your Eyes Only 4.30 (29%)

GAME TYPES

Fantasy Role-Playing 7.43
Moderate-sized games 7.24
SF Tactical 7.05
SF Role-Playing 6.98
Mini-sized games 6.92
Fantasy Role-Playing Supplements 6.70
SF Strategic 6.56
SF Role-Playing Supplements 6.39
SF Computer 6.32
SF Board 6.23
Fantasy Computer 6.05
Fantasy Tactical 6.03
Fantasy Strategic 5.49
Computer Wargames 5.43
Fantasy Board 5.33
Play-by-Mail 5.23
SF Miniatures 4.80
Monster-sized games 4.75
Fantasy Miniatures 4.60

SF TACTICAL GAMES

G.E.V. 7.61 (04%)
Ogre 7.57 (04%)
Star Fleet Battles 7.36 (07%)
Car Wars 7.24 (03%)
Azhanti High Lightning 6.95 (04%)
Triplanetary 6.67 (08%)
Starfire II 6.33 (12%)
Hot Spot 6.13 (09%)
Shooting Stars 5.90 (16%)
Outpost Gamma 5.88 (18%)
Voyage of the BSM Pandora 5.88 (10%)
Adventurer 5.85 (22%)
Ultra Warrior 5.40 (18%)
Revolt on Antares 5.16 (16%)
Spacefarers 5.16 (34%)
Survival/The Barbarian 4.58 (19%)
Dimension Demons 4.55 (13%)
The War of the Worlds 4.38 (12%)

SF STRATEGIC GAMES

Stellar Conquest 7.51 (06%)
Fifth Frontier War 7.17 (11%)
Imperium 7.08 (03%)
Star Viking 6.16 (18%)
The Air Eaters Strike Back 6.03 (06%)
The Sword and the Stars 5.80 (22%)
Nebula 19 . . . . . 5.28 (23%)
Space Empires 5.25 (31%)
Diadem 5.00 (29%)
Dark Stars 4.33 (22%)

SF BOARD GAMES

Cosmic Encounter 7.01 (04%)
Nuclear War 7.00 (11%)
Apocalypse 6.00 (30%)
Quirks 5.89 (11%)
Time War 5.50 (12%)
Dawn of the Dead 5.40 (13%)
4th Dimension 5.12 (17%)
Amoeba Wars 4.91 (13%)
Attack of the Mutants 4.86 (05%)
They've Invaded Pleasantville 4.50 (11%)

SF ROLE-PLAYING GAMES

Traveller 7.55 (01%)
The Morrow Project 7.31 (15%)
Champions 7.00 (27%)
Killer 6.57 (04%)
The Mechanoid Invasion 6.50 (43%)
Aftermath 6.00 (09%)
Space Opera 5.77 (05%)
Universe 5.76 (09%)
John Carter 5.48 (06%)
Star Patrol 5.40 (16%)
Villains & Vigilantes 5.03 (13%)
Gamma World 5.01 (04%)
Star Rovers Module 1 . . . . . 4.77 (33%)
Superhero 2044 . . . . . 4.30 (13%)

SF ROLE-PLAYING SUPPLEMENTS

Ordeal by Eshaar 7.48 (29%)
Leviathan 7.31 (11%)
Scouts & Assassins 7.29 (17%)
Enemies 7.28 (43%)
Sorag 7.17 (31%)
Argon Gambit/Death Station 7.09 (19%)
Operation: Rapidstrike 6.88 (22%)
Legion of Gold 6.80 (33%)
76 Patrons 6.75 (13%)
ISCV King Richard 6.56 (26%)
Star Sector Atlas 1 . . . . . 6.25 (30%)
The Vanguard Reaches 6.21 (24%)
Space Opera Ground & Air Equip. . 6.04 (10%)
Flight of the Stag 6.00 (43%)
Beyond 5.87 (45%)
Glimmerdrift Reaches 5.31 (23%)
Into the Ruins 5.00 (39%)
Martigan Belt 4.90 (30%)
Amycus Probe 4.12 (36%)
Encounters / Corellian Quadrant . . 3.77 (36%)
Break In at Three Kilometer Island 3.59 (24%)
Nithus 3.14 (45%)

FANTASY TACTICAL GAMES

Melee 7.63 (04%)
Wizard 7.52 (04%)
Swashbuckler 6.72 (12%)
Lords of Underearth 5.85 (16%)
The Trojan War 5.55 (25%)
Fury of the Norsemen 5.36 (17%)
Ragnarok 5.25 (22%)
The Castle 4.90 (45%)
Swordquest 4.83 (21%)
Swordlords 3.50 (34%)

FANTASY STRATEGIC GAMES

Dragon Pass 6.80 (29%)
Divine Right 6.45 (10%)
The War of the Ring 6.27 (05%)
Demonlord 6.06 (23%)
Valley of the Four Winds 5.66 (29%)
Barbarian Kings 5.50 (17%)
Demons 4.73 (12%)

FANTASY BOARD GAMES

Undead 6.55 (08%)
Dragonslayer 5.46 (08%)
Wizard's Quest 5.23 (10%)
Dungeon! 5.08 (06%)
Darkover 4.92 (15%)
Privateer 4.71 (39%)
Kings and Castles 4.66 (40%)
Transylvania 4.62 (29%)
Vampyre 3.84 (12%)

FANTASY ROLE-PLAYING GAMES

The Fantasy Trip 7.54 (03%)
RuneQuest 7.53 (05%)
Thieves' Guild 6.74 (07%)
Chivalry & Sorcery 6.45 (08%)
Bushido 6.43 (11%)
DragonQuest 6.09 (06%)
Advanced Dungeons & Dragons . . 5.99 (02%)
Land of the Rising Sun 5.88 (19%)
Tunnels & Trolls 5.28 (05%)
Skull & Crossbones 5.00 (12%)
Arduin Adventure 4.92 (19%)
Basic Dungeons & Dragons 4.86 (02%)
High Fantasy 4.52 (15%)
Adventures in Fantasy 4.34 (24%)
Original Dungeons & Dragons 4.34 (04%)
Dallas 2.90 (13%)

FANTASY ROLE-PLAYING SUPPLEMENTS

Thieves' World 7.95 (15%)
Griffin Mountain 7.57 (22%)
Cults of Terror 7.39 (19%)
Towns of the Outlands 7.09 (40%)
The Free City of Haven 6.87 (26%)
Grail Quest 6.77 (11%)
Frontiers of Alusia 6.76 (32%)
Grimtooth's Traps 6.74 (12%)
Tulan of the Isles 6.72 (41%)
Sewers of Oblivion 6.71 (33%)
Catacombs of the Bear Cult 6.57 (33%)
Chivalry & Sorcery Sourcebook . . 6.51 (17%)
The Blade of Allectus 6.44 (32%)
The Compleat Tavern 6.43 (31%)
The City of Carse 6.42 (38%)
Queen of the Demonweb Pits 6.40 (18%)
The Village of Hommlet 6.38 (21%)
Prince of Thieves 6.33 (33%)
Apple Lane 6.23 (21%)
Furioso 6.14 (41%)
Duck Pond 6.12 (22%)
Basic Role-Playing 6.11 (22%)
Unicorn Gold 6.11 (11%)
Security Station 6.08 (15%)
Expedition to the Barrier Peaks . . 6.03 (13%)
Swords & Sorcerers 6.00 (23%)
Iron Wind 5.92 (30%)
The Keep on the Borderlands 5.89 (18%)
Pieces of Eight 5.62 (36%)
The Book of Ruins 5.55 (25%)
The Isle of Dread 5.45 (24%)
Temple Book I 5.45 (23%)
The Black Tower 5.27 (32%)
Ravenscrag 5.16 (34%)
The Unknown Gods 5.08 (34%)
The Nightmare Maze of Jigresh . . . 3.83 (42%)

SF MINIATURES GAMES

Maatac 6.14 (33%)
Final Frontier 5.41 (28%)
Star Fleet Battle Manual 5.31 (11%)
Starfleet Wars 4.69 (26%)

FANTASY MINIATURES GAMES

The Emerald Tablet 5.18 (42%)
Knights & Magick 4.64 (29%)
Chainmail 4.61 (13%)
Witch's Caldron 4.40 (25%)

SF COMPUTER GAMES

World Builders 8.25 (33%)
Crush, Crumble & Chomp 7.50 (16%)
The Warp Factor 7.50 (29%)
Galactic Empires 7.42 (30%)
Robot War 7.31 (23%)
Galactic Attack 7.00 (37%)
Rings of Saturn 7.00 (38%)
Space Ace 21 . . . . . 7.00 (37%)
Time Traveler 7.00 (34%)
Invasion Orion 6.50 (14%)
Star Warrior 6.40 (21%)
ABM 6.23 (31%)
Apple-Oids 6.09 (27%)
Asteroids 6.07 (08%)
Mission Escape 6.00 (45%)
Super Nova 5.71 (39%)
Invaders from Space 5.14 (30%)
Time Lord 4.75 (37%)
Conflict 2500 . . . . . 4.59 (31%)
Project Omega 2.00 (39%)

FANTASY COMPUTER GAMES

Castle Wolfenstein 8.09 (37%)
The Vampyre Caves 8.00 (40%)
Ultima 7.83 (17%)
The Prisoner 7.66 (26%)
Wizardry 7.64 (30%)
Zork 7.31 (30%)
Hellfire Warrior 6.85 (15%)
Labyrinth 6.77 (25%)
Pirate's Cove 6.33 (37%)
Swordthrust 6.00 (33%)
DragonQuest 5.80 (26%)
Lords of Karma 5.80 (19%)

COMPUTER WARGAMES

Computer Air Combat 6.00 (39%)
Midway Campaign 6.00 (18%)
Nuke War 6.00 (15%)
The Shattered Alliance 5.50 (38%)
Computer Conflict 3.75 (37%)

PLAY-BY-MAIL GAMES

Star Cluster Omega 8.00 (20%)
Beyond the Stellar Empire 7.21 (36%)
Universe II 7.19 (11%)
Pellic Quest 6.80 (19%)
StarWeb 6.67 (09%)
Battle Plan 6.66 (40%)
Zorphwar 6.33 (38%)
Galaxy II 6.00 (24%)
Nuclear Destruction 5.70 (23%)
The Tribes of Crane 5.37 (08%)
Empyrean Challenge 5.13 (19%)
Trajan's Treacherous Trap 4.66 (34%)
StarMaster 4.57 (14%)
Warp Force One 4.25 (22%)
Arena Combat 3.75 (40%)
Cyborg 3.75 (36%)
Star Cluster One 3.59 (25%)
Operation Skybolt 2.66 (35%)
World Campaigns IV 2.00 (46%)

YOUR COMMENTS ON TSG

The second part of the survey dealt with what our readers wanted to see in TSG, and how they liked or disliked the various contents.

How helpful are TSG reviews in buying a game?
Very: 71% Somewhat: 28% Not at all: 1%

Do you consult TSG before buying a game?
Often: 72% Sometimes: 22% Rarely: 6%

CONTENTS

Readers were asked to "Rate the following KINDS OF MATERIAL as contents for TSG" on a 1 to 9 scale, with 9 being the highest.

Capsule reviews 8.11
Game reviews in general 8.07
Annual Game Survey 7.97

Featured reviews	7.57
News & Plugs	7.52
Game variant articles	7.17
Letters to the Editor	7.07
Game Master	6.96
Artwork	6.95
Cartoons	6.88
Complete game adventures/scenarios	6.79
Strategy hints for specific games	6.77
Editorials	6.74
News about gaming companies	6.64
Designers' articles on their new games	6.62
Contests	6.51
Color artwork	6.50
Advertising	6.33
News about tournaments and clubs	6.33
Game-related fiction	6.25
Convention news	6.25
Humorous articles	6.21
Continuing comic strips	6.20
Complete games in some issues	5.97
Science fiction	5.76
Convention reports	5.57
Articles on how to design games	5.56
Monsters for role-playing games	5.52
PBM Update	5.41
Interviews with designers and publishers	5.38
Articles on computer gaming	5.38
Science fact articles related to SF gaming	5.35
Articles on boardgames	5.23
Heroic-fantasy fiction	5.21
Accounts of actual game sessions	5.09
Computer programs for games	5.04
Reviews of new miniature figures	4.94
Articles on miniatures gaming	4.41
Articles on miniature constr. & painting	4.22
Articles on wargames other than F/SF	4.1
Science fact articles in general	3.8

LIKES AND DISLIKES

Readers were asked to fill in their own "most want to see" and "most not want to see" types of material. Again, most people put a stress on the quality of material we publish – they don't like "bad art," "bad fiction," etc. Fewer readers this year requested "fewer articles on computer games"; more of them (according to the survey) either own a home computer or have access to one.

As always, almost no one wanted to see articles on historical gaming.

DEMOGRAPHIC DATA

73% of the respondents subscribe to TSG, and have for an average of 2.82 years.

Average age: 22.

Average income: $11,000. (Several make more, but many are students with little or no income.)

Average number of readers per copy (including the respondent): 3.52.

Number of years of formal education: 0-8: 8%; 9-12: 17%; 13-14: 36%; 15-16: 22%; 17+: 17%.

55% of our readers are currently students.

31% own a home computer; 53% have access to one. (Usually those who have access to computers do not own one themselves.)

What the Publisher Wrote After He Read Through All the Comments . . .

Ver-r-r-ry interesting. On the whole, it looks as though we're doing a decent job. The single most common remark was, "Keep up the good work." In all honesty, the high ratings TSG (and SJG) got ought to be discounted a little – this is a survey of OUR readers, after all!

Reviews and news got the highest ratings. We'll continue the emphasis on reviews, and work hard to increase the amount of news.

Variant articles rated next-highest. PLEASE – write us some more! We do have a few coming up in future issues. Scenarios also rated high. There were two (!!) last issue, one this issue, and many more coming. Suggestions welcome.

Many people asked for less D&D; many also asked for less ***Traveller***, but they were balanced by lots of requests for MORE ***Traveller***! There were a lot of requests for more TFT – we'll try to oblige. ***Space Opera, Morrow Project, Aftermath,*** and ***Champions*** were also requested. Getting away from the RPGs, there were a great many requests for ***Ogre*** and ***G.E.V.***

Many people commented on "special issues." Some liked them; some didn't. We'll probably cut it down to about 3-4 special issues a year. (I am defining "special issue" as one with at least three articles on the same game or game system. Just because, for instance, the lead article is on ***Champions***, that does *not* make it a special ***Champions*** issue.) There WILL be an ***Ogre/G.E.V.*** issue – next issue.

A couple of you commented that we were turning into an SJG house organ – and a LOT of you said "You're not a house organ, but be sure you don't *become* one!" My response: I DO NOT want TSG to be a house organ – it will lose credibility that way. There will be 1 or 2 SJG ads per issue, and I figure that nobody can begrudge me part of "Where We're Going" to talk about new projects. *Anything else on SJ Games has to stand on its own.* You WILL see ***Car Wars*** stuff, because everybody is asking for it. You WON'T see ***Raid on Iran*** articles, because it has nothing to do with this magazine. (And you won't see as many ***Killer*** pieces, because the feedback indicated we were overdoing it a little.)

A few other specifics:

"*Why don't you add a "What are you playing most?" question to the survey?*"

Good idea. I think we should.

"*How about an article on play-by-mail campaigns for some of the popular fantasy and science fiction RPGs? I run one and I know others who do, as well.*"

Sounds interesting, but I never GM'd that way. Want to write it?

"*I'd like an article on conversions from one FRPG to another – especially converting D&D monsters to TFT.*"

By the time you read this, I'll have worked out a system – look for it soon, and thanks for the suggestion!

"*How about some news on SF/fantasy gaming outside the US? What are the good overseas game publishers? Is there any game activity outside of English-speaking countries?*"

Can you overseas and Canadian people send us some reports – 1,000 words or so? I know a lot of Swedes play wargames; I don't know about other languages, though I'd bet the Germans and Japanese have some good gamers.

"*How about an article on Ace of Aces?*"

I'd rather wait until Nova does a fantasy or SF game using the book system. AoA has been written to death as it is.

"*More game variant articles with printed counters.*"

We recently thought of a cute (and obvious) way to put better counters in TSG without messing up the magazine. Will be used soon. Hold your breaths.

"*TFT, TFT, TFT, TFT, TFT. **Ogre, Ogre, Ogre, Ogre, Ogre. G.E.V., G.E.V., G.E.V., G.E.V., G.E.V.***"

OK. OK. OK. OK. OK. OK. OK.

"*More play aids on the mailing cover.*"

Right. Got any suggestions as to what games, and what specific play aids would be useful? Last issue had another ***Car Wars*** aid, but there must be some good games out there (including other publishers') that we could publish aids for. Other publishers, are you listening? What would YOU like us to run?

"*How about a comprehensive review of other magazines and APAs dedicated to gaming?*"

We ran a magazine review article a while back – it may be time for another. I'm not familiar enough with the APAs (Amateur Publishing Associations) to write about them. Does someone care to rectify that omission?

"*Stay professional, but don't get too serious. More smiles.*"

We try! Last issue – which happened to be April – had a few more smiles than some people could handle; we got a call from one of our distributors wondering if they had gotten damaged copies. It seems that they couldn't find Page 42, which (if you believed the Table of Contents) contained Denis Loubet's article on "Naked Elf Women." Gotcha!

–Steve Jackson

THE SPACE GAMER reviews board games, role-playing games, computer games, video games, and game supplements. We review play-by-mail games if a reviewer is enrolled. We will review any science fiction or fantasy game if the publisher supplies a copy. We do not guarantee reviews of historical wargames. TSG may publish a review of a game we are not sent – IF a reader submits a review.

The staff will make reasonable efforts to check reviews for factual accuracy, but opinions expressed by reviewers are not necessarily those of the magazine.

Games for which reviews have been assigned or received include: ***The Arduin Adventure, The Book of Mars, Broadsword, Corsairs of the Turku Waste, Dragon's Hall, Enemies II, Escape from Stronghold, Fantastic Personalities, The FCI Consumer Guide, F'Deck Fo's Tomb, Glory Hole Dwarven Mine, House on Hangman's Hill, Mistywood, Portals of Irontooth, Robot Attack, Tegel Manor, Trading Team,*** and ***Vault of the Ni'er Queyon.***

Games for which we are currently seeking reviewers include: ***Asteroid Pirates, Death Duel with the Destroyers, Grand Master, Merc, Space Ace 21,*** and ***Valley of the Mists.***

DUEL MAGICAL (Ragnarok Enterprises); $1.95. Designed by Dave Nalle. 4-page, 8½" x 5" rulebook, 12-page character record sheets, ziplock bag. Not included: percentile dice. 1 or more players; playing time 15-90 minutes. Published 1982.

CAPSULE

REVIEWS

DUEL MAGICAL is conflict between mages in an arena. Each starts with "skill credits" which are spent to learn spells, obtain manna, or enhance ability to throw more spells per round and improve control. Players secretly write their spells, subtract manna cost, then reveal their spells. The "Spell Interaction Table" (SIT) cross-indexes attack and defense spells. Successful spells penetrate counter-spells, destroying opponents' manna. For instance, "Petrify" is reflected by "Mirror Barrier," but "Magic Blade" shatters "Mirror Barrier."

DUEL MAGICAL is like Eon's ***Cosmic Encounter*** mated to Metagaming's ***Wizard,*** with an echo of TSR's ***War of Wizards.*** It's easy to learn, can be played solo or with any sociable number, can be a quickie or a campaign. It requires thinking, planning, and tactics. Most important, DUEL MAGICAL captures the spirit of fantastic sorcerous combat and does it at an unbeatable price.

The main price you will pay is eyestrain. The SIT lettering is too small, impossible for some people to read. It should have been larger. Also, it is plain that small companies commit proofreading errors as lavishly as large companies. "Enhancement cost" is 10 skill credits in one paragraph and 20 in another, spell "level" isn't explained, and there are hazy rules needing interpretation.

DUEL MAGICAL is too abstract and simple to suit most gamers; repeated playings will tarnish the novelty. But it's rousing good entertainment, equally playable by novices or hardbitten wargaming veterans, is an excellent diversion, and has more of the flavor of a fantasy magic duel than any game I've played.

–Ronald Pehr

HIGH FANTASY (Reston Publishing Co.); $12.95 paperback, $14.95 hardcover. Designed by Jeffrey C. Dillow and Craig Fisher. 208 6" x 9" pages. Published 1981.

This is an expanded version of an FRP game originally published by Twinn-K in 1978. It is offered by a mainstream book firm which is a subsidiary of Prentice-Hall, and will inevitably reach many non-gamers through bookstore distribution. The format and the game are both aimed at persons with no previous experience of FRP, with overblown claims typical of mainstream American advertising. Unfortunately, the rules are marked by hasty writing and production, espeically in the parts added for this edition. In fact, the rules section is the closest thing to an illiterate book I have ever read, vying strongly with original D&D for the title of "most incompletely produced FRPG." Yet it does not share D&D's 1974 advantage of lack of competition.

The game is quite simple, lying somewhere between ***Tunnels & Trolls*** and ***Basic D&D.*** Only percentile dice are used. All factors affecting combat are reduced to one or two dice rolls. This system manages to include quite a few variables which affect combat, but it tends to reduce every monster and character to just two numerical ratings, offensive and defensive. This might not bother someone used to T&T, but it seems quite colorless compared with D&D and many other FRPGs.

There are nominally four character classes, but alchemists and animal masters are not viable compared to wizards and warriors. (Alchemists, by the way, are the only characters who can use guns.) The 50 magic items (new for this edition) listed are okay, although some are sneaky-powerful and could unbalance a game. There is little useful advice for the prospective referee, as the author expects referees to use published adventures as examples to work from. The monster section is extremely derivitave from D&D, and quite incomplete. For example, a number of different dragon colors are listed – exactly those used in D&D – but no definitions of differences between them are given.

A solo adventure by Craig Fisher, which is 40% of the book, is more literate than the rules, and perhaps the best solo FRP adventure I have seen. The player seems to be more in control of his fate than in the older T&T solos, and there is none of the absurdity which mars so many solos. The object is to get away from a palace, via underground passages, with a pre-rolled character; there is no treasure-gathering *per se.*

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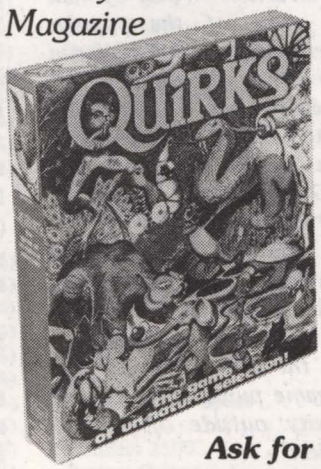

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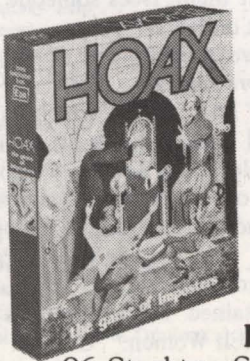

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As an introduction to the rules, it works very well. However, whether a few hours' play is worth the $5 this section roughly costs is open to question.

As for the game rules themselves, there is no reason for either novices or experienced FRPers to prefer HIGH FANTASY. If it were professionally edited and extensively rewritten to make parts more clear to those with no knowledge of FRP, HIGH FANTASY would be a decent, though not outstanding, introductory game. As it is, if Reston continues to show such disregard for basic production quality in its other game publications – adventures for HF and hardcover versions of ***RuneQuest*** and ***DragonQuest*** – then the hobby will suffer for it.

–Lewis Pulsipher

SUPPLEMENTS

ADVENTURES IN HIGH FANTASY (Reston); $12.95 paperback, $14.95 hardcover. Supplement to ***High Fantasy***. Designed by Jeffrey C. Dillow. 208 6" x 9" pages. Published 1981.

This book includes three adventues and a set of miniatures rules for Reston's ***High Fantasy***. The adventures are unrevised from their original separate publication by Twinn-K several years ago; as far as I know, the battle rules are new.

The adventures have some good points; the rationale in each case is interesting, if not always believable, and the author has a good imagination. Graphics are good, and there is plenty of detail. However, these are definitely of the "pre-determined script" style of adventuring; if the players miss the vital clues or otherwise make a hash of it – not always their fault – then the referee must either intervene with frequent broad hints or *deus ex machina,* or let them die. The scripts are good, but this form of adventure requires a rare type of player and referee.

It should be relatively easy to convert these adventures for use with another game. Unfortunately, the writing is extraordinarily bad at some points, and maps include no statement of scale (and in at least one case are evidently not drawn to scale).

The ***Lords of Conquest*** battle rules do not solve the basic problem of a fantasy battle – that the higher-level characters, player or nonplayer, will play a disproportionate part in determining the outcome of the battle. Also, ***Lords of Conquest*** reads like a rough draft, and would be hard to use in present form. Anyone without miniatures experience easily becomes lost.

Take a look at this book if you get a chance, but unless you play ***High Fantasy*** or love setscript adventures, you can find more useful material for your game at a comparable price, with more freedom to pick and choose.

–Lewis Pulsipher

THE CHAMAX PLAGUE/HORDE (GDW); $4.98. Designed by J. Andrew Keith and William H. Keith, Jr. Adventure for ***Traveller***. One 6" x 9" 48-page booklet. Three to nine players; playing time indefinite. Published 1982.

THE CHAMAX PLAGUE/HORDE are two interrelated adventures, though not in the sense that ***Marooned/Marooned Alone*** were. While that double adventure was essentially the same adventure from two different viewpoints, TCP/H features two separate adventures involving the same menace and, if desired, the same set of characters – the crew of the free trader *Mudshark*. Both take place in the Reidan subsector spinward of Darrian in the Marches. PLAGUE is

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the first of the two. In it, the crew of the *Mudshark* must attempt the rescue of a pinnace falling into the system's sun. The rescue leads them on a mission to the planet Chamax to search for the missing crew of a scientific survey ship to which the pinnace was attached. There, they find the ship, mysteriously holed, and . . . the Chamax Plague! (To reveal what it is would spoil the adventure.) HORDE finds the *Mudshark* on a tech-6 world in a nearby system, where a strange spaceship lands, releasing – you guessed it – the Chamax Plague. Only the characters and their higher-tech weaponry stand a chance of stopping the Horde from overrunning the entire world!

This is an excellent pair of adventures. Plans are even included for the converted subsidized merchant that serves as the survey ship and for the alien ship that carries the Horde. Once again the Keiths demonstrate their mastery in creating believable alien worlds and beings (including some especially nasty beasties).

The only real problem is the text locates an important feature (the power plant) in one place, and the map locates it in another.

THE CHAMAX PLAUGE/HORDE is probably the most exciting of GDW's double adventures yet released. Definitely recommended.

–William A. Barton

THE PHANTASTICAL PHANTASMAGORICAL MONTIE HAUL DUNGEON (Gamelords); $3.95. Designed by Larry Richardson and Kerry Lloyd with Rich Reichly. Play aid for FRP games. 40-page 5½" x 8½" booklet including 4 pages of maps in centerfold. Published 1982.

Some FRP campaigns can be categorized as silly, absurd, or surreal (the word you choose depends on where you stand). Some GMs maintain that original D&D, for example, is a game that begs for slapstick treatment. Even serious FRPers enjoy an occasional romp in the absurd as a change from the standard grim "realities" of character-life.

The MONTIE HAUL DUNGEON appears, from the cover and introduction, to offer such an escape from standard play, but it does not fulfill its promise. Although it *is* unbelievable, the humor is almost entirely of the fiendish sort which only the GM will laugh at, as he manipulates the more-or-less helpless players (though the players can make their difficulties worse through stupidity). There is very little slapstick, and virtually no belly-laughing. Whether you enjoy this type of humor or not, if you subject your players to it in anything but a "dream" they are likely to come out ready to strangle you. Although the legendary Montie Haul is mentioned, there is no giveaway of experience points and magical treasure.

The Gamelords FRP rules are used; a one-page summary advises in general how to convert to other systems. The editing, printing, and writing are up to Gamelords' usual good standards.

This might have made a decent article in *Dragon* magazine, but as a module it seems overpriced to all but those who delight in fiendish GM "humor." You'd be better off creating your own funny dungeon.

–Lewis Pulsipher

SEWERS OF OBLIVION (FBI); $5.95. Designed by Michael A. Stackpole. Solo adventure for *Tunnels & Trolls*. 48-page, 8½" x 11" booklet. One player; playing time one hour. Published 1980.

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Surely no one puts out a better solo dungeon product than Flying Buffalo. Physical standards are once again excellent. Danforth's art is always above average and, in one instance, excellent. Stackpole has done a marvelous job of inventing encounters, creating NPCs, and planting clues – again approaching perfection.

Now for the annoying problems. I felt like I was being manipulated by this adventure, forced into doing things or hemmed in by bad alternatives. The disease rules are not clear enough (how often do you roll?). Important rules are hidden in tiny print in the author's foreword where no one sees them. Instruction errors, in one case major, lead you in the wrong direction or to the wrong room. Besides all that, this adventure is supercharged – I thought fifth-level saving rolls (average here) were only for suns going nova; and how in the world does a seventh-level character get 300 combat adds unless his GM is a soft touch?

This is a marvelous creation, but my regular characters wouldn't touch it with a ten-foot pole. I recommend this only for those mythical people with seventh-level supermen!

–W.G. Armintrout

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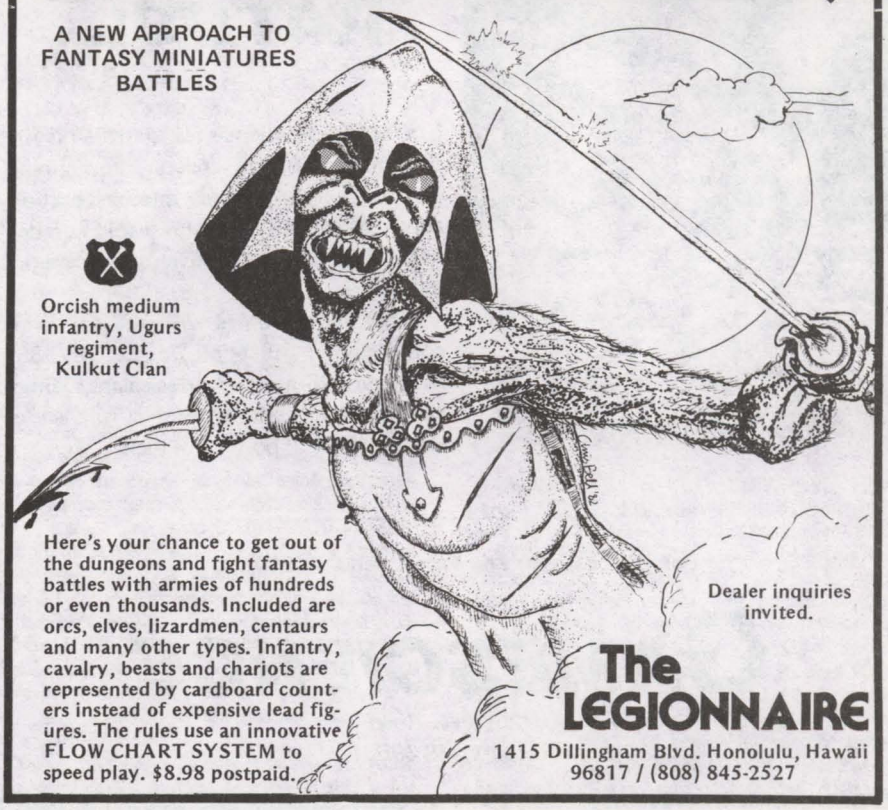

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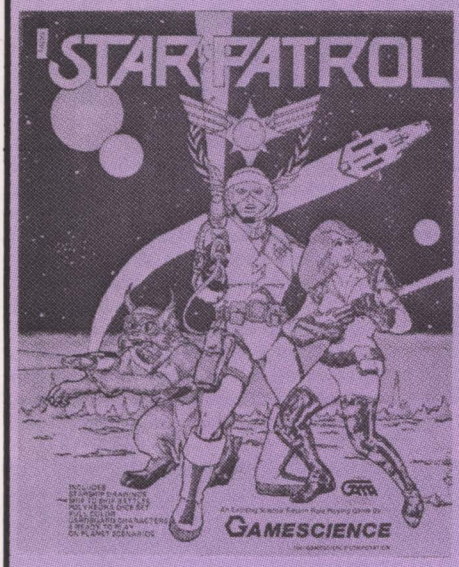

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WRAITH OVERLORD (Judges Guild); $12. Designed by Scott Fulton. "Universal Fantasy Supplement." Booklet of 112 8½" x 11" pages including covers, two maps. Two or more players; playing time indefinite. Published 1981.

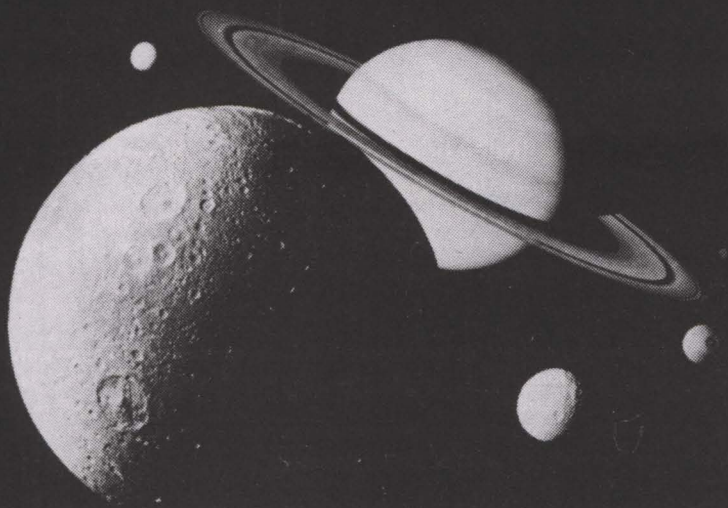
This package describes underground areas of Judges Guild's ***City State of the Invincible Overlord***. There are two or three levels, including five temples, goblin tunnels, an extensive tomb, etc., all connected by secret undergound passages. The discrete parts could be used in non-***City State*** scenarios by those who don't have that package. The author assumes reader familiarity with ***City State***, but the work is more or less intelligible without that knowledge.

All monsters are described in the text and in a section at the back. Magic spells, the skills belonging to professions, and much else are not explained, but are obviously closely related to ***Dungeons & Dragons***. In fact, this is largely a D&D/***Arduin*** supplement, though Judges Guild has made greater efforts to universalize this package than heretofore.

About half of the 61 NPCs described are prisoners in or below the city jail. Every person mentioned is an adventurer, most of them above first level. (Even a peaceful baker is a fourth-level bard!) Fortunately, the author has limited himself to characters no higher than ninth level. There are some good touches in the dungeons, but most of them are arranged to provide combat opportunities, not puzzles or long-term brainwork.

There are several weaknesses which should have been corrected by rigorous editing, such as a map on the back cover where the players could see it, reliance on height-and-weight table which frequently gives ludicrous results, one over-wide column of type instead of two readable columns, occasional grammatical slips, and

UNIVERSE III



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so on. The underground areas are unbelievably crowded with monsters, as well.

If you use ***City State*** you'll probably want this package. Otherwise you can probably find something more suitable to spend $12 for, though this is, by Judges Guild standards, good material.

–Lewis Pulsipher

PLAY AIDS

GAMEMASTER'S SCREEN FOR CHAMPIONS (Hero Games); $4.50. Two 17" x 11" screens folded in half. Play aid for ***Champions.*** Published 1982.

This is precisely what the name indicates – two stand-up screens providing the charts and tables useful in ***Champions*** play. They're printed on cardstock in four colors, with scattered superhero artwork. The GM gets the full array of tables, while the players are faced with the art and nine tables useful to them.

What is there to say about a GM's screen? It stands up; it keeps the players from seeing the villains' stats; it displays most of the charts from the game. The whole thing is laid out attractively and legibly.

There are some problems. The charts giving purchase costs for powers and skills is unnecessary for in-play use, unless the GM is constantly improvising superpowered NPCs during play. The screen is missing the charts for the effects of Mind Scanning, Telepathy, Mental Illusions, and Mind Control. The strength effect chart lacks examples of weighty items. There is the chart for "breaking things" from the rulebook, but not the alternative method proposed in the scenario ***Stronghold.***

All in all, it's a question of finance. I've made do quite nicely with a xerox of the most essential charts and a stand-up notebook; my $4.50 can go to copies of character sheets, hex paper, etc. GMs who really want a good-looking cardstock screen should pick this up; misers (like me) will improvise.

–Aaron Allston

GAMMA WORLD REFEREE'S SCREEN and MINI MODULE (TSR); $5.50. Module designed by Paul Reiche III. One 11" x 25" three-sectioned referee's screen, one 8½" x 11" 8-page adventure module. Four to nine players; playing time indefinite. Published 1982.

TSR has released a REFEREE'S SCREEN for its post-holocaust RPG, ***Gamma World,*** including in the package a mini-adventure module, "The Albuquerque Starport." The screen is made of heavy, durable cardstock and includes what are probably the most-used reference tables from the game. The ref side includes physical and mental attack matrices, armor and weapon class tables, weapon damage table, radiation and poison matrices, movement, reaction, encounter and artifact tables, and sections on creating NPC mutations and on ID devices. On the players' side are the weapon damage table again, the charisma table, a table of common items and trade values, and the fatigue factors matrix. The mini-module introduces a group of characters into the futuristic starport outside the remains of Albuquerque, destroyed (moan!) by a nuclear power plant explosion before the holocaust. The starport is generally intact and full of robots, mutants, and valuable artifacts, plus a working space shuttle which may convey characters to an orbital space station – and possibly strand them there if they're not careful.

The REFEREE'S SCREEN is a useful item, and should make playing ***Gamma World*** a lot easier for those refs and players both who haven't photographic memories and have to constantly check back and forth in the book for various tables. The module is interesting in that it introduces, if only briefly, the element of space travel into ***Gamma World*** (we all knew there had to be starports around *somewhere,* now didn't we?). Also, some of the new mutants introduced are rather interesting, if deadly – especially the mutant lizards and scorpions and the extraterrestrial plague zombies.

On the negative side, the screen, like so many others, has tables that the referee could certainly use printed only on the players' side. Another problem is that the blue-and-white bands printed on the players' side can have a rather disturbing 3-D appearance to tired eyes under certain lighting conditions, making the text difficult to read.

Generally, however, the GAMMA WORLD REFEREE'S SCREEN and MINI-MODULE is a good idea that was too long in coming.

–William A. Barton

COMPUTER GAMES

EMPIRE I: WORLD BUILDERS (Edu-Ware); $32.95. 48K disk for the Apple. One player; playing time 1+ hours. Published 1981.

WORLD BUILDERS is the first game in a planned "Empire Gaming Trilogy" and is itself really three games in one. The player takes the role of an emigrant from Earth who has set out to explore or settle the many worlds of the galaxy. The game begins at the NY Rocket Field, where a character rolls up his 10 characteristics and chooses his career path. (Note that although I am using "he" the game chooses the sex of character randomly.) The available choices are miner, missionary, and homesteader. Although

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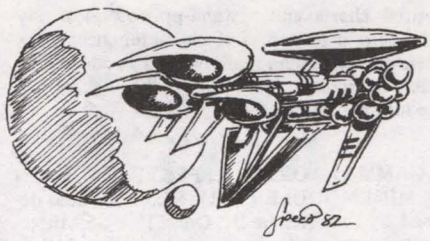
many of the game mechanics are the same for each career, each is, essentially, a completely different game. The miner travels from world to world digging holes in the gound in an attempt to find valuable metals and minerals. However, the deeper a miner digs and the longer he spends below ground, the more likely he is to suffer a cave-in. Although cave-ins are not automatically fatal they frequently are, and most miners will die before they have made their fortunes. The missionary travels from world to world looking for towns in which he can preach. When he finds a town he heads for the park (each town has a park) where he begins to preach. As he preaches a crowd gathers and, if he makes his charisma rolls, they grow enthusiastic. Eventually, the missionary is given a series of tests and if he passes them he is promoted in some vague and undefined way. The homesteader usually travels to only one world (although he might visit several before making his choice) before he settles down and attempts to farm.

The game is very detailed. I suspect that no one but the designer has ever found everything that can happen in the game. The mining game in particular is a challenge as you try to decide whether it is worth the risk to dig one more time before leaving. The procedures for eating, drinking, and breathing (on planets with inadequate atmospheres) are excellent and give the flavor of the situation without requiring excessive attention. The graphics are also clever, useful, and interesting – even if some of them do get boring after several plays of the game.

Unfortunately, in my opinion the bad points greatly outweigh the good. The game has a number of serious flaws. The mining option is basically a no-win situation. Eventually a miner is going to die. The homesteader game is difficult to understand. The basic goal (raising large families, herds, and harvests) is self-evident, but



it is never clearly explained how to go about doing this. Every time I played a homesteader the results were the same. I would plant my crops; some would grow, but before I could harvest them, some stray cattle would appear in the field and start eating them. If I captured some of these stray cattle the computer would not only fail to add them to my herd, but it would also completely eliminate those animals already in my herd. (I suspect a programming glitch here.) Whenever I did succeed in harvesting some crops most of them would immediately spoil, leaving me no better off than I was before planting. I must have been doing something wrong, but the rules and game gave me no clue as to what. Finally, the missionary game is truly hopeless. When the tests start, it is, as far as I can tell, all but impossible to deduce what you are supposed to do. There are other flaws in the game as well. One of my characters became immensely rich by buying water at a Casino and carrying it across the street to sell at a General Store for a 1000% profit. The game should be designed to prevent such nonsense.

I cannot recommend buying the game. The general system is interesting, and another game with fewer flaws would be a top-notch product, but WORLD BUILDERS is not.

–Rudy Kraft

NEUTRONS (Level-10); $29.95. Disk for 48K Apple II in machine language. One to four players; playing time 5-15 minutes per player. Cannot be saved. Published 1981.

NEUTRONS is an arcade game. It can be played using the Apple keyboard, but it is best with paddles. The game starts when a "neutron" is released into the game chamber where it bounces off walls, paddles, and bumpers accumulating points as it goes. An individual neutron can be kept in play indefinitely, but will eventually be lost by either escaping past the paddles or by falling down the hole in the center of the chamber. This hole can be blocked off temporarily, but at a cost in points. The game chamber is surrounded by eight paddles, four of which are controlled by each of the two paddle buttons. In the center of the chamber are four circular bumpers which begin with a value of ten. Each time one is hit, it adds to your score. If you hit a particular bumper ten times with the same neutron its value increases by ten. If all four bumpers are increased, a 10,000-point bonus is scored. Each game a player gets ten neutrons, though if he plays well a neutron will sometimes split in two.

This game has few good points. It works and it has pretty lights and cute sounds. It also keeps track of the all-time high score. It is sometimes fun to watch someone else play.

The game's biggest problem is that it is not a game of skill. My personal four best games all came when I merely released the neutrons and just watched while holding down the paddle buttons. When I attempted to play sensibly my scores were consistently lower. Perhaps I am inept. However, several other players, although initially amused by NEUTRONS, agreed after several games that is was purely a matter of luck whether the neutron stayed in play. This is particularly true considering that the neutron

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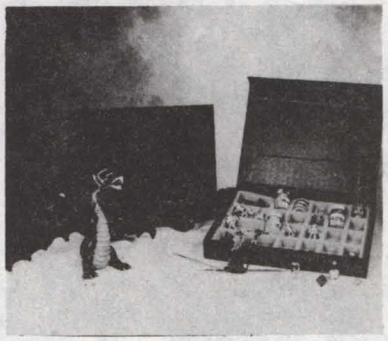

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sometimes bounces behind the paddles and stays in play, while other times it doesn't. No doubt the programmer understands this, but I sure don't.

I cannot recommend this game under any circumstances. Even the simplest version of *Pong* involves more skill and is a better game.

–Rudy Kraft

PLAY-BY-MAIL GAMES

CRIME LORDS (Gamers Unlimited); $3.50/turn, plus $1.50 for extra sheets and $1/trade sheet. Designed by Michael S. Lewis. First turn 1981.

When the interstellar empire collapsed, the city Var on the planet Taccii fell into total anarchy. Players take the part of "crime lords," bosses of part of the city. Each player spends 30 points for "wealth" and "popularity," and selects both a personal title and dynasty name (Fatman of the Kongo Dynasty, for example). The gamemaster responds with a list of the city subsectors the player controls, an equipment and price list, and a listing of current rumors. Each turn, players file three instruction sheets – "Hirelings and Research," describing what sort of people you want to hire at what price, and what you want your scientists to investigate, "Expenses," buying equipment and paying salaries, and "Orders and Movement," with which you provide orders for up to eight groups of followers. Players may give orders to more than eight groups or do extra research by purchasing extra turn sheets. They may also get involved in trade, which costs extra each turn. The gamemaster replies with a hand-typed update sheet, filling you in on what your forces did and providing the latest news and rumors. There are no turn deadlines, so players have as long as they wish to complete their turns.

There is a lot of action in this game. In only my first four turns, I have captured one crime lord, raided another crime lord's home base, narrowly missed assassination, and intervened in the Taylor/Tjarkin war! Players have a lot of options, including who to hire (gunmen, troopers, assassins, surveyors, security guards, scientists, drivers, conmen, spies, and propagandists) and at what level (from first degree to "ninth master"), how to spend money (equipment ranges from "hoversrafts" and blast rifles to fortresses and large power guns), and what to research (transportation, weapons, armor, or space travel). Since the game is human-moderated, you can do anything the moderator allows – from kidnapping to the development of nerve gas. Technological breakthroughs are crucial.

Unfortunately, the rulebook leaves out whole chunks of material, including map numbering, elementary movement, how hirelings function and what is *not* included on the update sheet. Therefore, players spend a lot of time asking questions, and experienced players have an advantage on new players. New players may also be smothered by events before they are ready – I was under attack right from the beginning, and the tables were turned only by luck and daring. Because the map is checkerboard-style, diagonal movement is fastest. Players who fire their turns back right away have a slight advantage over slower players. There is also a fair amount of bookkeeping.

But I have to recommend CRIME LORDS. I enjoyed it a great deal in spite of all the problems. The game is exciting, the gamemasters are good, and it has the feel of a role-playing game more than anything else. I just hope they rewrite the rulebook soon.

–W.G. Armintrout

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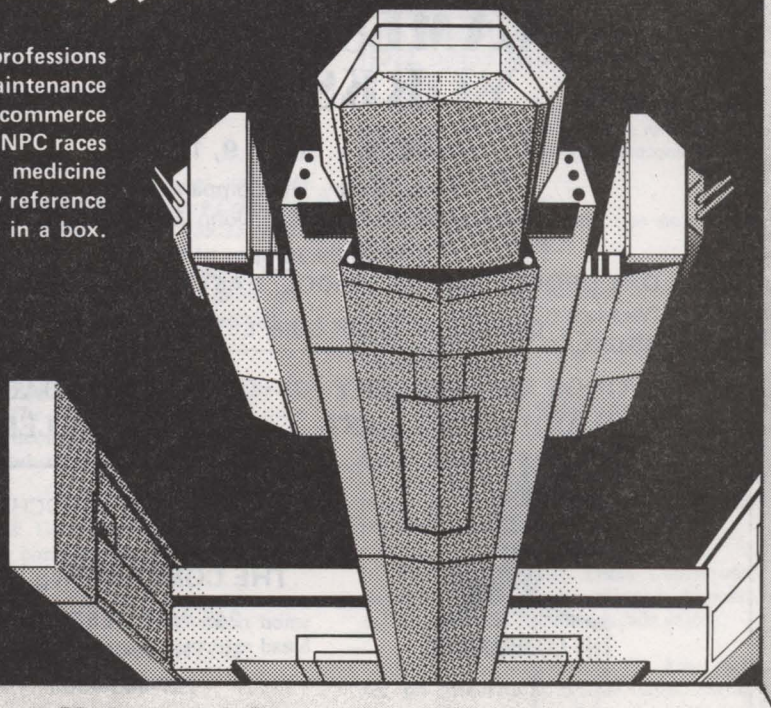

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PBM Update

UNIVERSE II
(Clemens & Associates)

Company News: We have acquired a new computer and will soon be able to add more subroutines to the game program.

Game News:

Quadrant I: Several large battles have taken place in the Mufrid-Diadem corridor. The security of Etuel supply bases is in question.

Quadrant II: Bounties for the destruction of enemy ships are quite widespread. Contact alliance leaders to find out the prices offered.

Quadrant III: Relations between several major alliances seem to be stabilizing. Productive colonies are widespread making trade runs profitable.

Quadrant IV: The Unity Alliance has issued a formal declaration of war against the Regajian Empire. Final purpose is the total destruction of all Regajian bases and trading systems.

Regajian Empire: Ships of the Unity Alliance have attacked our outlying bases, spreading death and destruction. The violation of the peaceful Regajian Empire by these barbarians is being avenged by the noble Terran starships who are dedicated to honor and justice. Special praise is due the RSS Atotarho which has been resupplying our bases even when outnumbered by the Unity outlaws.

Ixtli Empire: Coordination of our defensive buildup is proceeding under the administration of Terran starship 1111H (IXV Zartraz). All individuals and alliances wishing to join the Ixtli Empire should contact him.

Muar Empire: Several bases have come under attack by Terran starships. These sneak attacks have had little overall effect in the Empire and the intruders are being hunted down by Task Force 4 of the Muar Raiders.

Jon Clemens

CRIMELORDS
(Gamers Unlimited)

Game News: The Mighty Tjarkin Dynasty made one of its first major blunders in its present period of expansion. Instead of overwhelming the House of Taylor forces with its massive armies, it decided to attack the Kai-fang almost simultaneously. While the troopers on the Taylor front were successful in pushing Count Taylor's defenders back, the Kai-fang venture was a total disaster. Over a fourth of the Tjarkin army, as yet undefeated, entered the Kai-fang confidently, expecting little or no resistance. The result was a blood bath. Fanatic hordes of martialists from the Kai-fang and other neighboring sects tore into the Tjarkins. Over three-fourths of the Tjarkin army, some of the finest troopers in Var, were slaughtered without mercy by the avenging martialists. If the Kai-fang should choose to retaliate in force, the mighty Tjarkin Dynasty would be almost defenseless until it could call up troops from the House of Taylor border, stalling the final, crushing attack on Count Taylor's territory. The Awesome One has awakened the sleeping giant that might very well be his doom.

Trevor Lyre

THE TRIBES OF CRANE
(Schubel & Son)

Company News: Current plans call for at least three new computerized play-by-mail games in 1982. First out is expected to be a grand scale space adventure entitled *Star Venture.* Later in the year, there will be a grand scale invasion-type war game and a power politics game entitled *Intrigue*. They will all be second generation fully computerized games.

Game News: On Crane I, the ice city of Columbine successfully fought off a siege attempt by the forces of the Dark Union. The city of Columbine was designed and built by Eylikon, Guildmaster of the Society of Geographers and Surveyors. The location of the city was carefully chosen atop the featureless Apex Glacier in northernmost Crane. The city was built almost entirely of ice with massive sloping walls. These walls make the city virtually impossible to scale even with ladders and siege towers. The Dark Union scouts had failed to report the significance of Columbine's unconventional construction; a major factor in the defeat of the Dark Union in the subsequent battle.

On Crane II, the Northern Clan's city of Downs was taken in an operation called Snowman by the Tale Forces. Now that the city of Downs has fallen, the Northern Clan's assault on the heavily defended city of Call, which will follow shortly, will be a decisive test for the Northern Clan's might.

STARMASTER (Schubel & Son)

Game News: The combined forces of several powerful empires in the Central Galaxy assaulted the Valkyrian Empire's homeworld and destroyed it via earth fusion generator bombardment. The Valkyrian Empire, which had destroyed several homeworlds itself (including the 4th generation Tassui Confederation's homeworld, considered by many the best defended world in the galaxy), escaped total destruction because its main naval units were elsewhere at the time. Valk Lifewringer, the Valkyrian leader, claimed vengeance and swore to obliterate those responsible. The Lyranian Star Imperium and the Pikan Andromedan Dominance Sphere contributed large warfleets to the attack; Valkyrian WarMoons should be severely tested versus these high technology races.

George V. Schubel

PBM Update reports on professionally-moderated play-by-mail games. Notices are monthly. Copy deadline is 60 days previous to the first of the month, for the issue in which the notice is to appear. (Deadline for the November issue is September 1.) All copy should be typed and double-spaced. Notices should not exceed 200 words in length. TSG reserves the right to edit copy as necessary.

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Letters

I appreciate your position on not being able to include all games in your survey. I would like, however, to point out an outstanding book you left off. The book is ***Adventures in High Fantasy*** by Jeffrey C. Dillow. This book has three separate adventures plus rules for fantasy armies. Like ***High Fantasy***, ***Adventures*** is also published by Reston Publishing, and is outstanding. The adventures are well-written and detailed. The rules for fantasy armies are exceptional. This system is simple *plus* logical. I have been playing fantasy role-playing games for seven years now, and nothing exceeds the system created by Mr. Dillow in ***High Fantasy*** and ***Adventures in High Fantasy***. Please cast my vote for these books.

Roy Rafalco
Indianapolis, IN

In TSG 45, W. G. Armintrout put forward six pointers to improved play in *Starweb*. While I agree with the general tenor of his remarks, there were a number of matters on which I also disagree and there was at least one glaring omission.

The chief bone of contention which I would like to raise is that the impression left by the article that attacks should always be carried out with allies rather than alone, lest the clash of equal forces lead to a stalemate. However, a well conducted solo attack will not bog down, and alliance attacks are not all beer and skittles.

To be sure, many players do get their fleets tied up in slogging matches and miss the main chance, but that is because they do not have "the knack." All things being equal, which is what we are supposing, this consists of arriving at the opponent's home world with strategic surprise, or as near to it as one can manage. In warfare it is always best to fight on the other guy's territory. His transports get diverted, his production gets disrupted and his HW gets neutralized. After that the result is inevitable.

Now I am all for cracking walnuts with sledgehammers, and as far as an alliance attack goes, the more the merrier. There are, however, certain drawbacks. In the first place, the partners have to be in the appropriate special arrangement. It may not be possible for all of them to get at the victim. Secondly, they require a high degree of coordination. Thirdly, the more spoons in the pot, the smaller the helping. Division of spoils is invariably a tricky question.

Thus a player who wishes to get on in the Web would be most unwise to think exclusively in terms of alliance for his offensive moves. The determined individual can often complete his task while the alliance is still getting its act together.

A. D. Young
Mt. Eliza, Australia

In the November 1981 issue (45), I was pleased to find the article "*Starweb:* Six Ways To Stop Your Losing Streak." W. G. Armintrout explained SW strategy so that even a rookie gamer could understand it.

The only section I disagree with is "The Backstab." Mr. Armintrout says, "you should get rid of any ally if his score is rising dramatically faster than your own." He also states, "I see nothing wrong with knocking out a player who is trying to beat me, alliance or not."

There are two basic flaws in this thinking. First, what happens if you have no chance of winning late in the game but your ally is within reach? Do you say, "No ally of mine is going to beat me," or do you think, "This player has been a good friend to me and if I can help him/her win, it will be a victory for our team."

The second flaw, Mr. Armintrout briefly mentions. You have to keep up a good reputation if you expect to win in future games. Even if you suspect an ally of working against your best interests, if you go around "zapping his transport fleets," you are going to get the reputation of a player who can't be trusted, and then how do you get someone to help you win? It would be a better idea to confront your rotten ally and officially dissolve the alliance. This will insure a continuing reputation of being trustworthy, which will put your allies' minds at ease. If you do not do this, any potential future ally may pass you over for someone who can be trusted.

All in all, the *Starweb* article was very good but if you want to continue playing that game, do your damnedest to keep all promises.

Dennis Lee Shaw
Beloit, Wisconsin

NEWS & PLUGS

Automated Simulations is converting its Epyx line for the IBM personal computer.

Staff changes: Larry DiTillio is no longer with Flying Buffalo. John Rankin, formerly of T-Rex, is now marketing director for SJ Games. Trace Hallowell, former editor of *Interplay*, has left Metagaming to pursue his studies at the University of Texas. (Trace is also looking for free-lance design work.)

T-Rex, the miniatures company holding the *Space Opera Ground & Air Vehicles* license, has reorganized. It will continue as a design team, but will no longer produce miniatures or other products on its own. The T-Rex casting gear has been sold to SJ Games; the *Space Opera* miniatures have been licensed back to Fantasy Games Unlimited, and an upcoming future tank rules set will appear under the FGU imprint. The T-Rex partners explained that, "We saw we were going to have to become a big casting company to survive, and that's not what we wanted."

War Games, an upcoming United Artists film, concerns a young computer whiz who breaks the code security of the NORAD computers to play (you guessed it) war games, and triggers an international incident. Do war games end the world? We haven't seen the script yet . . .

Lord British is no longer programming for California Pacific, which is rumored to be in financial trouble. On-Line Systems will market British's *Ultima II.*

Synergistic Solar has announced two 16K programs for the TRS-80: *Hypergate Centurion* and *Hypergate Patrol*. Price: $39.95 each.

Walt Disney Productions is filming *Tron*, the story of an arcade-game programmer who has to fight for his life when he is mysteriously transported into a computer game.

Devecee Publishing (POB 561, Fenton, MO 63026) offers *The Worlds of Tekumel*, a quarterly magazine dedicated to *The Empire of the Petal Throne.* Subscription: $8.00. Single issue: $2.75.

Tom Loback General Artwork is incorporating. The new company will be called Dragontooth Inc.

Coleco has unveiled its Colecovision home video system, including a game cartridge based on *Tunnels & Trolls*.

Atari plans to release one game cartridge a month for its home video computer.

Reston Publishing has announced *Space Knights*, an adventure program for the Atari 400.

New fiction mag: *Oracle*, featuring the great writers Mike Stackpole and Ken St. Andre (but not the great game designers Fritz Leiber or Roger Zelazny). Price: $3.00/issue, or $7.20 for a 4-issue sub. Write: Dave Lillard, POB 19222, Detroit, MI 48219-0222.

Duke Seifried has resigned as president of Heritage, accepting a position as executive vice president of TSR. Howard Barasch is replacing Duke at Heritage.

Grenadier has released two new sets: "Kobolds" and "Wererats."

Ral Partha has released a number of new figures: "Angel," "Archangel," and "Jabberwock," also, a set of "Rangers" and a set of "Skeleton Warriors."

Masterpiece Miniatures is reportedly back in production after a six-week hiatus. Their shop had to be closed down after a disgruntled sculptor destroyed a number of masters, ruined boxes of finished products, and carted off portable machinery . . .

The International Trade Commission has ordered 18 companies to cease importing or selling imitation *Pac-Man* arcade games.

Mattel has announced 12 new cartridges for its Intellivision system, including an *Advanced Dungeons & Dragons* game, and two games based on *Tron*.

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Coming soon . . . The Griffon's Eye, a bi-monthly FRPG newsletter. Send your articles, art, and ideas for our first issue. Eric Lawrence, 2215 Ward Pkwy, Ft. Worth, TX 76110.

Calendar

May 14-16: SUNCON 82. Wargames con. Contact c/o Army ROTC, University of Miami, P.O. Box 248166, Coral Gables, FL 33124.

May 14-16: TEXARKON. SF con. Send SASE to Texarkon, P.O. Box 6643, Texarkana, TX 75501.

May 28-30: CONQUEST III. SF&F con with D&D and TFT tournaments. Contact @ P.O. Box 32055, Kansas City, MO 64111.

May 28-31: GRIMCON IV. RPG con. Contact @ P.O. Box 4153, Berkeley, CA 94704.

May 30: M.I.G.S. III. Free wargaming sessions, seminars, etc. Contact Les Scanlon, President M.I.G.S., 473 Upper Wentworth St., Hamilton, Ontario, Canada L9A 4T6.

June 4-6: DALCON 82. Wargaming con: AD&D, Ogre/GEV, Squad Leader, etc. Contact @ Richland College, 12800 Abrams Rd., Dallas, TX 75234.

June 4-6: GENGHIS CON IV. Adventure gaming, boardgames, computer games, miniatures. Contact David A. Bottger, P.O. Box 2945, Littleton, CO 0161.

June 10-13: FANTASY FAIR. Comics, SF&F, wargaming. Contact @ 1206 Atlanta Dr., Garland, TX 75041, or call Larry Lankford @ 214-369-4437.

June 11-13: MICHICON. To be held in Detroit. Contact @ P.O. Box 787, Troy, MI 48099.

June 18-20: HOUSTONCON '82. Nostalgia, SF&F. Contact L-5 Society, P.O. Box 713, Stafford, TX 77477-0713.

June 18-20: SF CON V (formerly CONEBULUS). Science fiction con with wargaming. Contact @ 337 Hartford Rd., Syracuse, NY 13208.

July 2-4: NANCON 88-U. Gaming con. Send SASE c/o Nan's Game Headquarters, 118 Briargrove Center, 6100 Westheimer, Houston, TX 77057.

July 9-11: ASGARD '82. Wargaming and RPGs. Contact @ P.O. Box 90952, East Point, GA 30364.

July 16-18: OKON. SF&F and wargaming. Contact @ P.O. Box 4229, Tulsa, OK 74104.

July 23-25: ORIGINS '82. Adventure gaming convention. Write to Origins 82, P.O. Box 15405, Baltimore, MD 21220, or call 301-539-4634.

July 24-25: KOMMAND CON 82. Wargaming con. Contact @ Kommander's Wargaming Club, P.O. Box 2235, Mansfield, OH 44905.

August 6-8: TEXCON 1982. D&D, Car Wars, etc. For more information, send SASE to TexCon 1982, 8028 Gessner No. 1805, Austin, TX 78573.

August 19-22: GENCON XV. Wargaming convention. Contact @ P.O. Box 756, Lake Geneva, WI 53147.

September 2-6: CHICON IV, aka WORLDCON. World SF convention. Contact @ P.O. Box A3120, Chicago, IL 60690.

September 4-6: PACIFICON. Gaming convention. Contact @ P.O. Box 5548, San Jose, CA 95150.

September 24-26: BABEL CONFERENCE '82. SF&F, comics, wargaming. Contact c/o Dave Marshall, 1160 36th St. SW, Wyoming, MI 49509.

October 1-3: ARMADILLOCON 4. SF convention. Contact c/o Robert Taylor, P.O. Box 9612 NW Station, Austin, TX 78766.

CONVENTION ORGANIZERS – let us know about your con! Free publicity never hurts.

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AR: 1996

unched their attack on the
merican base early October
prise, accomplished the ma-
the Americans were pushed
cing against the clock. They
oture the American Colonies
eir Nuclear Mortars to begin

two players, and depicts the
layers command either the
until the Marines arrive, or
the fierce Soviet forces attempting to crush U.S. resistance before American reinforcements show up on the scene.

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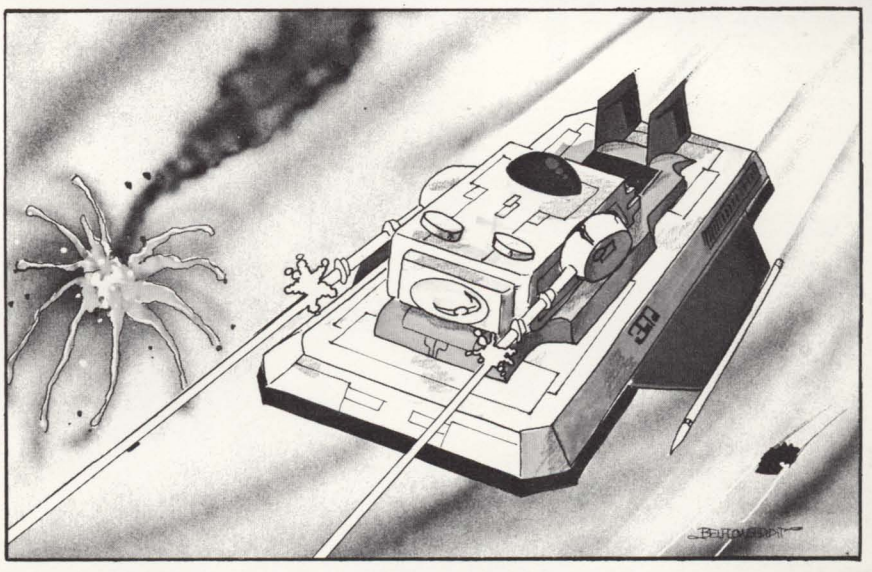

THE FIRST LUNAR WAR: 1996

Early on the morning of October 27, the Soviets launched their attack on the American moon base in the crater Clavius. It reached the American base early October 28th. The Soviets, carried forward by the advantage of surprise, accomplished the majority of their initial objectives within a matter of hours: the Americans were pushed back to the perimeter of Clavius. The Soviets were now racing against the clock. They knew that in order to be successful they would have to capture the American Colonies before the Marines could arrive. And so they pulled up their Nuclear Mortars to begin the vicious day-long siege.

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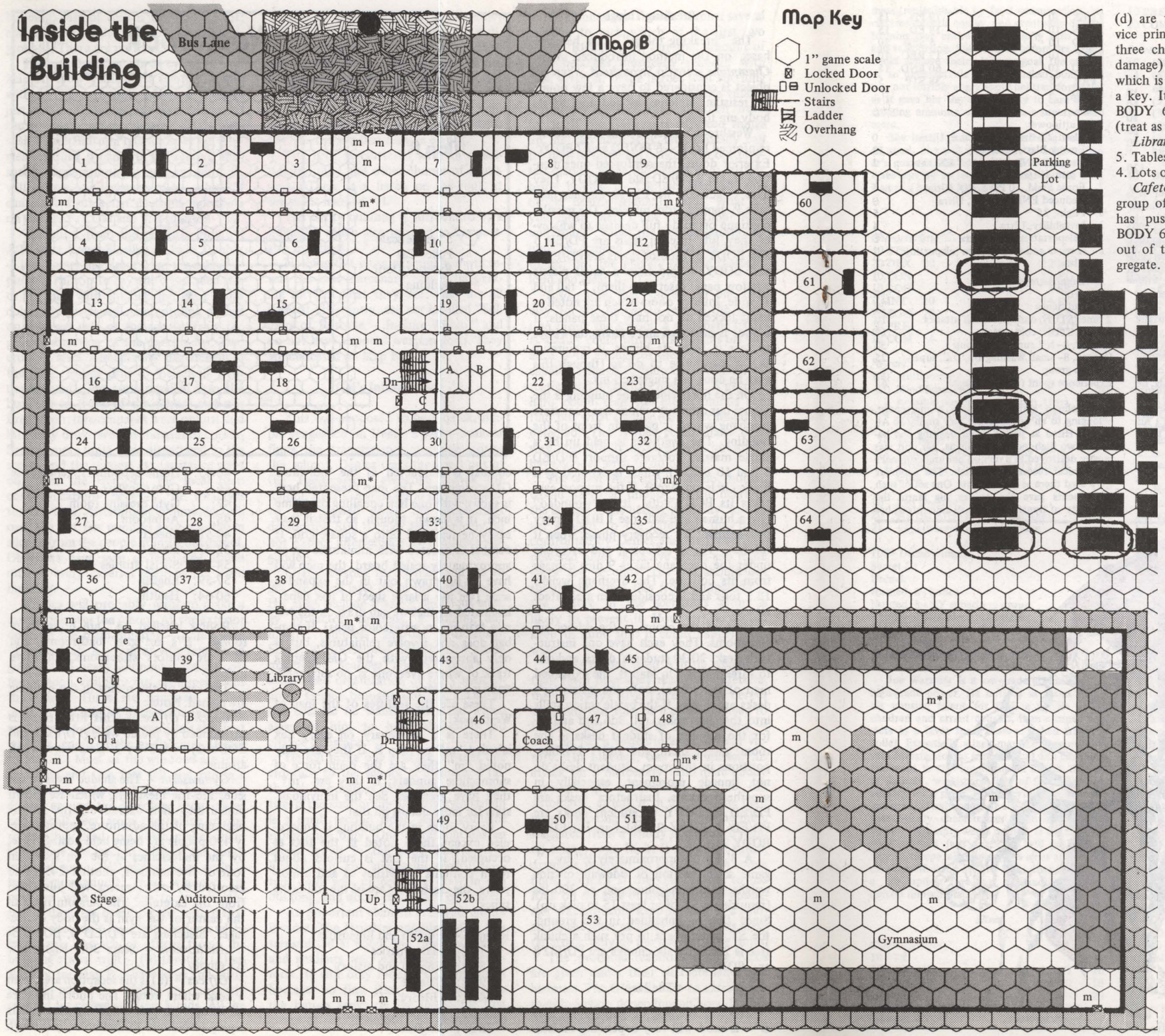
Inside the Building



(d) are the offices of the principal and vice principals, which have one desk and three chairs (treat as student desks for damage) each. (e) is the teachers' lounge, which is locked; any faculty member has a key. It has four sofas – PD/ED 4 and BODY 6 – and a pair of small tables (treat as student desks).

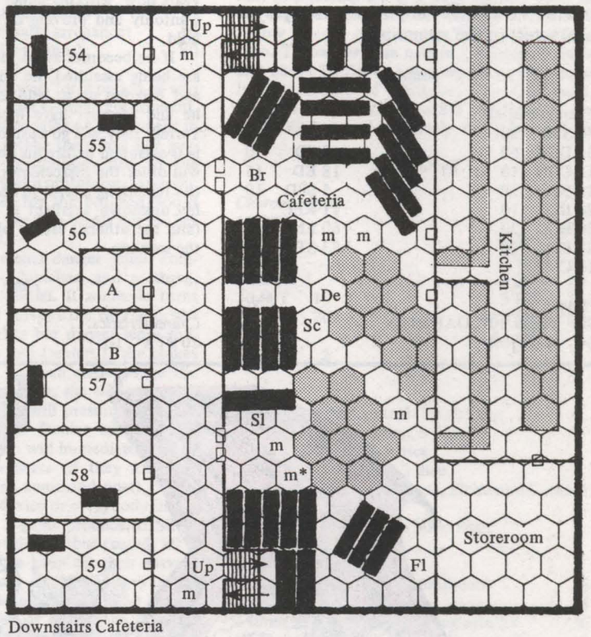
Library – Shelves are PD/ED 4, BODY 5. Tables and chairs are PD/ED 4, BODY 4. Lots of books.

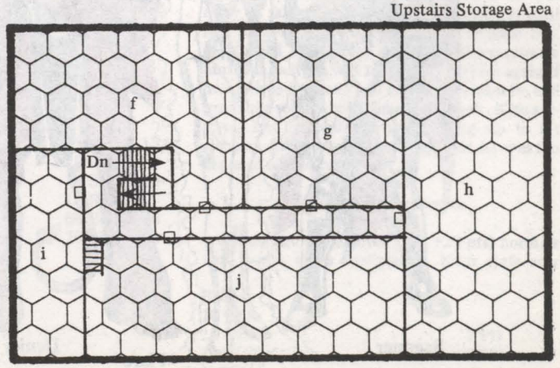
Cafeteria – This is where the second group of hostages is being kept. Briareus has pushed all the tables (PD/ED 6, BODY 6) and chairs (PD/ED 2, BODY 4) out of the center so that they may congregate. (The tables are shown on the Map B cafeteria inset.) The five supervillains and five mercs are here. Their positions are noted, with the first two letters of a villain's name showing where he/she is on the map. The cafeteria doubles as a fallout shelter and is lead-lined, inhibiting X-Ray.

Kitchen – Kitchen equipment is not noted, as it probably won't enter the situation, but the GM can improvise if it is necessary – PD/ED 6 and BODY 7. The counters *are* shown; they have the same defenses and BODY.

Storeroom – Refrigerated.

Upstairs Storerooms – (f) through (j) contain spare desks, filing cabinets, tables, etc. (j) has a ladder in one corner, leading



Downstairs Cafeteria

Upstairs Storage Area